00085774

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016

TRAVELS

THROUGH

SICILY

AND

THE LIPARI ISLANDS,

IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, 1824.

By A NAVAL OFFICER.

ILLUSTRATED WITH VIEWS AND COSTUMES FROM DRAWINGS MADE ON THE SPOT, AND ON STONE BY L. HAGHE.

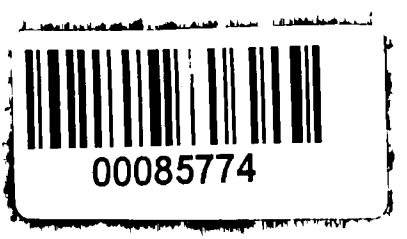
85774ae

Altra volta quivi fiorivan le arti e popolo d'eroi era:
Or tutt' è rovinato tanto a fatto la guerra.
Città distrutte vedonsi, con belle ruine per diversi rivi
Fra piani fruttiferi non mai di frondi privi:
Rupi canuti o coperti di verdura, e monti altissimi
Con fiori ed erba fra prati amenissimi.
Mira O Stranier! fuor del Tyrrheno non è mai uscita
Isola piu bella, con ciel piu sereno, od aura piu lieta.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. FLINT, 28, BURLINGTON ARCADE.

1827.

914.58
Tra/Tra
85774



PRINTED BY T. AND J. E. FLINDELL, 67, ST. MARTIN'S-LANE.

LONDON:

INTRODUCTION.

SICILY, according to the hypothetical authority of the earliest Greek writers, was originally a peninsula, united to Calabria by a narrow neck of land, which, by some great convulsion of nature, was torn asunder, forming that passage which is now denominated the Faro of Messina; hence the name of Reggio, which is derived from the Greek, signifying to tear or break, and was applied by its original founders, because built contiguous to the supposed place of rupture.

Concerning the primitive inhabitants of this island nothing satisfactory is known, their history being entirely enveloped in mystery, or obscured by the impenetrable veil of fable: and to the poets alone we are indebted for that information which establishes the existence of its gigantic race of possessors, familiarly known by the appellation of Cyclops and Læstrigons; all of which, notwithstanding the grave assertions of Cluverius, Fazellus, and others, we may, in the present age, safely undertake to treat as mythological and fictitious. The idea, however, is supposed to have originated in the Phœnicians, who were very early commer-

cial visitors* round its coasts; and viewing with jealous apprehension the first and increasing incursions of the Grecian adventurers, who, in every way, they considered to be rather formidable competitors, they endeavoured to warn them from the island, by sedulously propagating alarming reports and horrifying descriptions of monstrous giants that were said to inhabit the woods and caves, and who indiscriminately destroyed all that came within their reach, or approached their coast; although the result did not prove so successful as the Egyptian traffickers anticipated. Considerable fears, however, were naturally excited in the minds of many, which, under the influence of the coward principle, aided by time, led to a thousand inventions, illusory dangers, and exaggerated traditions, from whence have originated all those incomparably fine fictions of the Mæonian bard, as well as those of his imitative successors, who have made this country the theme of song.

The island, on account of its triangular form, and three characteristic capes, was denominated by the early Greek adventurers Trinacria. It was for a long period occupied by people of various nations, none of whom obtained an empire over the whole, or even any considerable part of it, until its general appropriation by the Sicanians, who origi-

* The Tyrian factories are known to have been established on the southern coast as early as the foundation of Carthage.

nated in a colony from near the river Segra, in Spain, under their leader, Sicanus: hence their name, and that of the island, which they called Sicania. To them succeeded the Sicels, or Siculi, a horde of invaders, who, about twelve hundred years before Christ, were driven, with their wives and children, from Latium, in Italy, by the Oscans; after various struggles they subdued the Sicanians, whom they confined to the western extremity, and established an undisputed authority in the island, which they called by its present name of Sicilia.

At the destruction of Troy a party of Trojans, under Elymus and Egestus, landed near the Crinesus, on the territory of the Sicanians, by whom they were hospitably received, and there established a colony called Elymians, from their royal leader, and founded the towns of Elyma and Egesta.

During this period the Phœnicians increased in wealth, power, and ambition; but from the piratical incursions, rivalry, and opposition, they began to experience from the Greeks *, (who had become skilful navigators, as well as daring in arms), they united their factories into the three settlements of Solus, Motya, and Panormus, which being most con-

* It is to be observed, that when the ancients speak of the Greek colonies in Sicily, it is meant those which, in consequence of a mandate from the Delphic oracle, settled in various parts; for Sicily was well-known to the Greeks before the Trojan war, who, long antecedent to that period, established commercial factories in rivalry with the Phœnicians.

tiguous to their native shores, received protection from the now flourishing and independent republic of Carthage, to whose dominion they became the consequent appendages, and which, subsequently, under the pretence of commercial occupation, facilitated the aspiring views of the Carthaginians to the whole island.

In the eighth century before Christ, Greece, from some state policy or other, but it is generally supposed on account of a superabundant population, encouraged emigration to a considerable extent, particularly to Sicily; to induce which the accustomed *ruse** was had recourse to, of influencing in favour of the government, the oracle of the popular God of Delphos, which, on being consulted by the emigrating adventurers, necessarily recommended enterprises and colonization in some part of Sicily. Numbers consequently repaired thither under the direction of suitable leaders, who laid the foundation of the future fame and greatness of the island; new states were formed, and all those splendid cities rose up in succession on the southern coast, which subsequently figured so conspicuously

* It scarcely need be observed, that the oracles held in such reverence by the Pagan ancients were mere human engines, by whose means government ministers, as well as priests, practised impostures on superstition, credulity, and ignorance, in every instance where the interests of the one or the other called forth the necessity of the case.

in the history of the Grecian colonists, Naxos*, Syracuse, Gela, Camarina, Agrigentum, Selinon, and innumerable others, all in their turn attaining the various advantages of power, prosperity, and independence.

But as they rose to fame and riches, jealousies were excited by rivalry, which engendered animosities, and sowed the seeds of contention, war, and bloodshed, in which they subsequently so frequently became involved with each other. Whilst Carthage, as well as the mother country, looked with a longing eye to interfere with the affairs of a country whose riches allured their avarice, and whose formidable power began to awaken apprehensions for their own future safety.

In the year 480 B. C. the Carthaginians, under the pretence of espousing the cause of Himæra against Agrigentum, and seeking redress for Theron's usurpation of its possession, made their first formidable attack on Sicily†, and sent to the former place a tremendous armament under Amilcar, but

* Naxos was the first established colony, seven hundred and thirty-three years before Christ, being one year previous to the foundation of Syracuse.

† The true cause of this invasion was the ambitious designs of the Carthaginians, who conceived the dissentions of the Greeks presented a favourable opportunity for the furtherance of their aspiring views, and were the more speedily urged to it by Xerxes, who at that time was marching against Greece, and instigated the Carthaginians to make a diversion in his favour.

by the combined efforts of Agrigentum and Syracuse, under the direction of the intrepid Gelon, the expedition was annihilated, the Carthaginian leader slain, and Sicily saved.

The jealousy of the mother country, too, did not fail being stimulated by the prosperity and aggrandisement of Sicily, particularly the Athenians, who, having long ago agitated plans for its appropriation, availed themselves, at length, of an application, on the part of Egesta, for aid against the Selinuntines and Syracusans; and in consequence equipped a formidable expedition against Syracuse in the year 413 B.C. But they were destined to experience no better fate than the Carthaginians; for after a series of ill success, sickness, and disaster, the celebrated defeat of Nicias on the banks of the Assinarus completed the destruction of the Athenian invaders.

The Carthaginians, still bent on the execution of their designs, and preserving a lively remembrance of their disgrace, vigilantly waited a favourable period to revenge their fallen leader, and retrieve their fame; therefore, at the call of the still persecuted Egesta, in the year 410 B.C., sent an army, under the appropriate command of the fallen Amilcar's grandson, Hannibal, who prosecuted a most inveterate warfare against the Sicilians, in which he destroyed Selinon with its proud temples, razed Himæra, and spread death and devastation wherever he went.

A succession of desolating wars followed between Carthage and the Græco Sicilian cities, in which each in their turn experienced the frowns or smiles of fortune; the latter always subject to the caprice and ambition of the blood-thirsty tyrants who governed them, until the memorable era of peace and liberty, which was restored by the magnanimous Timoleon in the year 340 B. C.

But the harmony and independence thus established by the noble-minded Corinthian soon relapsed into the former system of oppression; factions were excited, anarchies burst forth, and wicked tyrants rose up; amongst them the blood-thirsty Agathocles, who not only tyranised at home, but prosecuted the most desperate war against the Carthaginians; in aid of which he sequestered the properties of individuals, plundered cities, robbed the public temples of their sacred riches, and in the event of opposition perpetrated the most barbarous outrages and bloody deeds that ever violated the laws of humanity. At his death a thousand contending interests prevailed, and anarchy raged throughout the island, which reduced all parties to the necessity of calling in the aid of Pyrrhus, King of Epire *, who, after reducing the various cities to obedience, was prompted by his own ambition to invade the rights of the people he came to defend; and, casting off the mask of friendship, he wielded

* 278 B. C.

the sword of oppression, until an unanimous feeling of opposition put a stop to his career, and drove him out of the island.

About this period a large body of Campanians*, (who had been mercenaries employed in the army of Agathocles,) on their return home, stopped at Messina, where, being kindly received, they treacherously abused the hospitality shown them, massacred the inhabitants, seized on their town and property, and established themselves there in the form of a republic, under the name of Mamertines, entering at the same time into a confederacy of mutual protection with their opposite neighbours† of Rheggium, who, like themselves, had by treachery usurped the possession of the town.

These Mamertines, aided by the Rheggians, made frequent aggressions on the territory of the Syracusans, to whom they soon became such troublesome neighbours, that Hiero of Syracuse entered into a league against them with the Carthaginians, and completely worsted them in a sanguinary battle, which so reduced and weakened their army, that they were precipitately obliged to consider, in general council, the best means of ensuring their own preservation; when a strong opposition of opinion

* From Campania, in Italy.

† The then inhabitants of Rheggio were a legion of Romans, who, tempted by the wealth of the place, had driven out the rightful owners, and seized on the town.

prevailed; the result of which was, that one party united with the Carthaginians and gave up the citadel, whilst the other shut themselves up in the city, and sent ambassadors to Rome with an offer of their submission, and an entreaty for immediate protection against the arms of Carthage.

The senate, anxious to gain a footing in a country that presented such advantages to their future prospects of ambition against Carthage, lost no time in sending an army* to Messina, under the consul Claudius Appius, who soon succeeded in driving out the Carthaginians, and forcing Hiero into an alliance with Rome, thus giving rise to those protracted contests so well known in history by the name of the Punic wars, the first of which lasted twenty-one years, and terminated by obliging Carthage to renounce the empire of the seas, and to abandon Sicily, leaving Rome in possession of one-half of the island.

Towards the end of the third century before Christ, the defection of the Syracusans from the Roman alliance caused the senate to aspire to the exclusive possession of the island, which was effected by a consular army under Marcellus, who, by the celebrated siege and downfal of Syracuse, 212 B. C., totally overthrew the Grecian power, and subjugated the whole island, which was from that period

* 263 B. C.

constituted the first province of the Roman republic, and placed under the government of prætors.

Rome justly prided herself on so brilliant an acquisition. It proved an inexhaustible magazine for all sorts of provisions, afforded a secure retreat for their fleets; and thus serving as a stepping-stone to Africa, facilitated the conquest of her formidable and rival power of Carthage.

Under the government of the Romans, the island experienced many years of prosperity and happiness, until bowed down by the tyranny and peculations of its governors, whose avarice and oppression disturbed its tranquillity, and gave rise to tumults and seditions, which ultimately terminated in a general rebellion of the slaves, and those sanguinary and ferocious struggles familiarly known in the Roman annals by the name of the servile wars*; during the continuance of which it is supposed more ruin and destruction was caused than in all the exterminating wars of the Carthaginians.

In the last century before Christ, during the wars of the triumvirate, Sicily became the theatre of contest between Pompey and Octavius, the latter of whom ultimately prevailing, restored many of the ruined towns, and re-colonised them with Romans.

In the year of our Lord 501, the Goths, under Theodoric, subjugated the island, which they occu-

* 136 B. C., and 105 B. C.

pied until 515, when the brave Belisarius restored it to the empire. It notwithstanding fell a prey to the constant depredations of pirates, and at the division of the empire became subject to Constantinople, when it dwindled into the most irretrievable insignificance.

After this period, and about the middle of the seventh century, the Saracens commenced their desolating invasions of the island, and after a most desperate attack, in the year 327 A. D., they reduced the whole country to their subjection, established their capital at Palermo, changed the names of all the cities and places, and introduced the arts and sciences, which flourished two centuries under a succession of emirs, until the year 1038, when George Maniaces was sent by the Greek emperor to recover the long lost island. Aided by some valorous Normans, he succeeded in alarming the Mussulmanic power; but he repaid his brave associates with ingratitude, and was consequently deserted by them; on which the Saracens again gained ground and resumed their sway: but the Normans now looked to the conquest of the island on their own account, and in the year 1060 landed at Messina with a body of troops under Robert Guiscard and Roger, who, after ten years of intrepid struggle and bravery, finally expelled the turbaned host, tore down their crescented banners, and rehoisted the standard of the cross. The Normans were a

peculiarly pious people; in the cause of christianity they were more fervent and active than any nation of the age; they founded innumerable conventual establishments throughout the island, for the more permanent promulgation of the faith of the Redeemer, and built several fine churches and cathedrals.

In the year 1130, Count Roger annexed that part of Italy called Apuglia and Calabria (then by right of conquest belonging to the Normans, and forming a department under the denomination of Sicily), to the government of the island, and was crowned at Palermo, under the title of king of the Two Sicilies, which title has been continued ever since, and transmitted, with the annexation of the island, to the crown of Naples.

The Norman line legally was extinguished by the death of William II., surnamed the Good, in 1189; but such was the civil commotion caused by the want of a succession, that the people were glad to fix any one on the throne, and in consequence elected Tancred, a natural son of King Roger, after whose death Sicily fell by conquest into the hands of the Suevi, under Henry V. and the emperor Frederick II.

After the battle of Benevento, Pope Clement IV. drove out the Germans, and gave it, together with all the islands, to the French, under Charles of Anjou, during whose reign of seventeen years the

Sicilians suffered every species of oppression, cruelty, and slavery. At length the insulting conduct and levity of the French officers towards their wives and daughters urged them to desperation, and gave rise to that memorable insurrection of 1282 called the Sicilian vespers *, at which period all the French were simultaneously massacred, according to the plans and instigation of John of Procida.

The crown was then offered to Peter I. of Arragon, when the Spaniards first began to reign, and continued until 1410, at which period the line of Arragon became extinct by the death of Martin II., and the crown was ceded to Ferdinand I. of Castile. At this time many Spaniards and Italians of all states came to reside in the island, which enriched a number of its cities, particularly that of Palermo, the present capital.

In 1453, when Mahomet took Constantinople, innumerable colonies of Greeks fled also to Sicily, where they established villages and hamlets, which to this day are denominated Casali de Greci.

In 1458 the crown succeeded to John of Navarre and the Austrian kings of Spain, under whom it continued until the death of Ferdinand III., in the year 1516. And at the peace of Utrecht, the island was ceded to Victor Duke of Savoy, who yielded

* It received this appellation on account of the toll of the vesper bell being fixed as a signal to commence the work of destruction, which happened on the Easter Monday.

it to Charles V., in exchange for the island of Sardinia.

At the commencement of the eighteenth century the Spaniards again became masters of the island by conquest, when the king gave it up, together with Naples, to his second son, Ferdinand IV., under the title of king of the Two Sicilies, and established the laws of succession also; that it should never more be united to the monarchy of Spain.

TRAVELS

IN

SICILY AND THE LIPARI ISLANDS.

A LOVELY bright morning, ushered in by the golden rays of the glorious orb of day, and the soothing zephyrs of a southern clime, bespoke the most promising auspices of a favourable passage to the fruitful shores of Sicily, whither my friend and self had a long time looked forward with secret feelings of enthusiasm, and peculiar sensations of delight, to explore: but scarcely had we bid adieu to our abode on the delightful Chiaja, than a sudden and unusual change was manifested in the atmosphere as to our feelings. The barometer (we afterwards learnt) fell as by magic, whilst Fahrenheit's thermometer descended from 45° to freezing point, and no sooner had we reached the place of embarkation than the sky gathered up all the horrific frowns of a transalpine storm; piles of dismally black clouds rolled over each other with furious rapidity, enveloping in their melancholy gloom the beautifying features of Capo di Monte, Vesuvius, and St. Elmo, occasionally disgorging showers of immensely large hail stones, that seemed to create a panic in the crowds that were assembled on the mole to witness the departure of our steam-

boat the Ferdinando. The sea of that so recently tranquil bay, which but a few moments before had reflected its splendid shores as from the surface of a brightened mirror, now rose with menacing fury, and presented all the dreary blackness of the vault above. Every symptom, indeed, indicated the approach of a tremendous confusion of the elements; the slip and rocks were crowded with spectators, uttering prayers for the safety of their friends or fellow-creatures, and reproaches on the English seamen for their temerity in attempting to contend against such apparently inevitable danger. The captain even for a moment hesitated, until I directed his attention to a bright gleam of light from the north-west, which bespoke the return of fair weather, and was no sooner observed than the anchor was at the bows, the paddles put in motion, and we glided rapidly away, leaving the murmuring sighs and complaints of the motley group that tenanted the mole and its vicinity to be wafted with the drifting storm against the mountain's top.

Two hours had scarcely elapsed before my prognostications were realised; the angry clouds dispersed, and the heavens resumed the bright cerulean die which so pre-eminently characterises an Italian sky, and the gales moderated to a favourable breeze, which enabled us, by the application of a couple of fore-and-aft sails, to give additional impulse to the steam.

Such a change naturally tended to the comfort of all on board, and not a little seemed to gladden the hearts of the more timorous, as well as most numerous part of the passengers, the Italians, who were now only beginning to conquer the prejudices with which they at first viewed so apparently precarious and unsafe a mode of conveyance. They unanimously returned to the deck, from whence they had, at the commencement of the storm, most precipitately

retreated to the cabin, for the purpose, I imagine, of diminishing the horrors of danger by avoiding its contemplation, on the same principle of feeling which impels the silly ostrich, when pursued by his destroyers, to run his head into the bush.

All now was sociability and good humour, whilst every one seemed desirous of coming forward with a stock of courtesy and urbanity to cultivate an acquaintance with his *compagnons du voyage*; for, on such occasions, much advantage occurs to the man of observation and inquiry; and the retiring aristocratic Englishman too frequently denies himself a fund of both information and amusement by yielding to that characteristic tendency of shrinking from every individual who has not been known to him half a century, or introduced to his acquaintance according to the rigid rules of etiquette. I must confess I have ever derived an inexhaustible source of diversion and instruction by indiscriminately mingling with the various members that compose the societies of steam-boats, packets, and public coaches: some afford you knowledge on one or other of the many departments of art and science; some may impart valuable local information; whilst others beguile the hours of travelling incarceration by their interesting manners, and alluring (though perhaps lighter) style of colloquial powers.

As we slid rapidly along the liquid path, the rocky eminence of the celebrated Capri rose before us, like a barrier placed by nature to defend the enchanting bay from the rude intrusions of the boisterous main.

An excursion a few days before enabled us to become acquainted with this once-degraded theatre of imperial iniquity. *Quem rupes Caprearum tetra latebit incesto possessa seni?* The island is a short mile distant from the

promontory Atenes, four miles in length from east to west, and one in breadth, strongly fortified by nature with immensely high precipitous and broken rocks, encompassed on every side by a deep sea, and gifted with an incomparably fine climate, that gives genial mildness to the colds of winter, and yields an invigorating freshness to the heats of summer.

In the centre, between the eastern and western heights, is a beautiful and luxuriant valley, abounding in figs, vines, oranges, almonds, and olives, divided by fields of corn, and embellished with a variety of odoriferous shrubs and plants. At the end of this valley is situated the town of Capri, old, shapeless, unpicturesque, and dirty, though thickly populated with a well-disposed people, and has a bishop's * palace, with two or three convents.

The island derives its present appellation from the number of goats that formerly browsed and multiplied round its rocks, and was first annexed to Rome by Augustus Cæsar, who, on landing for the first time, observed an old hollyoak, which he interpreted into an auspicious omen, and in consequence exchanged the island of Enaria for it with the republic of Naples: he made it an occasional place of retirement and relaxation from the trammels of imperial dignity and was used to call it Aprosapolis, from the Greek, which expresses its local amenity.

Tiberius also spent the latter part of his shameful life, allured by a retreat at once so salubrious, so difficult of access to an external enemy, so easy of defence, and at the same time so favourable to the gratification of his diabolical propensities.

* The bishop derives the principal proportion of his revenue from a tax on quails, which are taken in this island in enormous quantities, and sent to Naples for sale.

He erected splendid and extensive palaces in different parts of the island, adorned with groves and gardens; undermined the rocks with highways, grottos, galleries, and secret places of retirement, where he abandoned himself to his brutal pleasures, and the commission of every iniquitous vice that can degrade man or outrage nature.

On the east side of the island, which, although the most inaccessible from the sea, stands the largest town, called Ano Capri, where a beautiful statue, rich tessalated pavement, broken remains of amphoræ lamps, &c. &c. were found, and whither the traveller is first ushered by the ciceroni of the place, to commence his classical researches.

In the centre of the valley above described stands a hill, covered with the scattered ruins of the fortress, and one of Tiberius's choice abodes; though the most considerable ruin is on the extremity of the eastern promontory, which exhibits a series of immensely high apartments, arched at the top, without either chimneys or windows; the substructions only, I imagine, of the stately and prodigious fabric they supported above. Medals, leaden pipes, mutilated statues, and other specimens of antiquity, have been more frequently discovered near this spot than elsewhere in the island, consequently incline me to suppose this to have been the most costly and favoured palace of the emperor. What a splendid situation!—how worthy the site of imperial dignity!—though tenanted and degraded by the worst and basest of God's creatures. It commands an incomparably fine panoramic view, comprehending, towards the east, the richly-featured bay, studded within its crescent sweep with a variety of beautiful and luxuriant islands; the bold promontories to the north and south, with their jutting rocks and precipices; whilst a sparkling sea to the west contrasts

its milder beauties with the scene. From this eminence we traced an ancient paved road leading to the shore. The few remains existing of these once massive and prodigious edifices seems accounted for, according to Suetonius and Pliny, by the Romans having, at the death of Tiberius, sent an army of pioneers to deface or destroy every object that might serve to record, in future ages, the horrors which they were ashamed so long to have tolerated with impunity in their wicked and tyrannical emperor.

I could not help feeling those sympathetic shudderings which the memory or relation of cruel facts call forth, as we passed under the heights once the scene of the monster's blood-thirsty diversion. There it was he so frequently caused victims to be tormented in his presence, then cast from the precipice to the shore beneath, where sailors were stationed, with additional instruments of torture, to complete the work of cruelty and destruction.

Rounding the southern point, we observed the Sirenum Scopuli rising out of the rippling wave, celebrated by Virgil; and opposite to them the Syren's Cave, now called the Grotta Oscura, and is, of its kind, a great object of curiosity and picturesque beauty. The entrance is low and narrow, but opens to a spacious interior, nearly three hundred feet in length, lighted only by the glimmering reflections from the water that laves its base: the roof is vaulted, covered with a variety of incrustations and stalactitic formations, and distils limpid streams of pure water through a multitude of little pores that communicate with the earth above. As we receded from the view, we were reminded of the approach of night, and that time sped fast, by the golden radiance of a setting sun, which was then shedding his last sparkling beams on the shores we had left, and lent

to every object in nature that genial harmony of colouring we are only gifted to behold in the more favoured regions of the south.

At eleven we descried the shooting flames of Stromboli, and after pacing the deck to a late hour in the enjoyment of beholding that extraordinary volcano, whose unceasing fires serve as a faro to the mariners of these seas, I enveloped myself in my cloak, and on a chair, against the weather bulk-head, partook of the delightful repose of undisturbed slumber until five o'clock, A. M., when we discovered the little island of Ustica, standing like a solitary guard-house on the main, to protect the approach to its parent isle. It lies about forty miles N. ½ W. from Palermo, and according to Diodorus, as well as Ptolemy, is the Osteodes of the ancients, an appellation given by the Greeks, which signifies the island of bones, on account of the scattered mass of human bones with which they found it covered,—the remains of an army of mercenaries, who were inhumanly landed there, and left to perish by the Carthaginians. Being in considerable arrears for long services, besides which experiencing ill-treatment under the continual sufferings of privation and fatigue in their various expeditions, they were roused to anger and revenge, consequently meditated a revolt against their ungrateful masters, to be put in execution the first favourable opportunity that occurred ; which unfortunately too soon reached the ears of their treacherous rulers, and they were selected, to the amount of six thousand of the most dangerous, together with the authors of the plot, and sent (on the pretence of setting out on some favourite and long-looked-for expedition) to this island, where they were mercilessly abandoned to their cruel fate. It belonged, at that period, in common with the rest of the Liparis, to the Carthaginians; by Strabo, Pliny,

and the moderns, designated by its present name of Ustica, which is a mere corruption of its Grecian one. The Romans first colonised it, and built a considerable town, the truth of which is attested by many discoveries of coins, Roman pavements, amphoriæ, &c. In the fourteenth century, it was thickly populated with christians, contained an extensive convent and church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but long since devastated by African corsairs, for whom it became a favourite lurking-place in their predatory pursuits, until the year 1765, when, to prevent which, the King of Naples caused a colony to be established there, and the present town to be built, which stands within the cove, over a sandy beach, on the north-east side, called Santa Maria, and presents an interesting object to the spectator, who views it from the sea whilst gliding in his bark along the rugged coast. It is pretty well fortified by forts, which crown the northern heights, whilst a conspicuous pyramidal watch-tower stands on the southern hill of the bay. It contains nearly two thousand inhabitants*, who are healthy, robust, and certainly more cleanly than their neighbours the Sicilians. The island is of submarine volcanic formation, boasts numerous valuable mineral specimens, particularly of the chrysolite, and possesses a fertile soil, though very few springs, which nature seems to have partly substituted by abundant and copious dews. Guard-houses are placed within hail all round the coast, which, with the tower of Spalmadora, on the west, and the fort of Falconara on the east, secure it against piratical invasion. On

* Their costume is novel and picturesque, particularly that of the women, which consists of a long crimson mantle, neatly embroidered, and fringed at the bottom, with a little round cap or bonnet of the same colour, behind which a long green handkerchief hangs, and falls in graceful folds over the shoulders.

the north side stands an isolated rock of lava, surrounded with deep water, a feature that unaccountably characterises the whole range of Liparis, without exception; and round the coast are to be seen a number of curious grottos, with deep water within, particularly the one on the east side, which presents a most singular stalagmictic incrustation of shells, intermixed with lavas inclosing schorl.

As soon as day-light began to illuminate the distant horizon, the gigantic peak of Ætna opened to our view, rising, like a fabled monster, from the sea, vomiting forth thick columns of black smoke into the pure firmament that encircled his brow; in the mean time we receded, with astonishing rapidity, from little Ustica, for the wind had entirely died away, and the sea, becoming perfectly calm, pliantly yielded to the powers of the machinery.

At three in the afternoon we entered, for the first time, the beautiful Bay of Palermo, formed by the rocky height of Mount Pelegrino on the N. W. and Cape Zafferano on S. E., enclosed, on the land side, by a bold chain of mountains, which presents to the eye the beautiful appearance of a splendid amphitheatre, with the town of Palermo stretching along the shore, whose cupolas, towers, and palaces glittering in the sun like some gorgeous city of Arabian tale, exhibited a picture of incomparable beauty as we glided down the bay, under the sterile rock of Pelegrino. To our right we passed the Lazaretto, in a rocky creek, called Aqua Santa, and above it, at the base of the hill, the princely mansion of Belmonte; and at four came to an anchor in a fine harbour, protected by a strong mole, carried out nearly a quarter of a mile, with a light-house and fort at one end, and an arsenal at the other. After going through the accustomed forms of the pratique-office, we landed in a cove called Cala Felice, the only remnant of the so much celebrated ancient port.

Palermo is the Panormus of the ancients; so called (according to Diodorus) from the Greek*, signifying a great haven, and was first settled by the Phœnicians, who, on the incursions of the Greeks into Sicily, chose this, on account of its commodious harbour, as one of the most suitable places to concentrate their scattered factories under the protection of the Carthaginians, and, in due time, made it their strongest hold, to the great annoyance of the Romans, who, in the first Punic war, found it necessary to dispatch an armament, with three hundred ships, under A. Aquilius and C. Cornelius for its reduction. The Romans, on this occasion, experienced, near Messina, a considerable loss by shipwreck and storm; however, they arrived at their destination, and notwithstanding a long, brave, and spirited resistance, they at length, together with two hundred vessels, got possession of the town, which they fortified, and rendered of great importance to them in the further pursuance of the war.

On account of its local amenity, and the luxuriance of its soil, it became, successively, the favoured capital of the Vandals, Goths, and Saracens; the latter of whom long flourished in barbaric splendour, holding it nearly two hundred and thirty years, with the rest of the island, and embellishing it, according to their characteristic taste, with public buildings, palaces, and gardens: to which the Normans also subsequently contributed, and it has since become the modern metropolis of a viceroy.

It is the richest and most beautiful city of Sicily, situated

* Παν ὁρμος, by the Saracens called Balirmu, afterwards modernised into its present name of Palermo. It was sometimes called, by the Saracens, Medina, or the city, as is seen on a magnificently embroidered robe, (now, I believe, at Nuremburgh), which originally belonged to the Moslem governors of Palermo, and contains an Arabic inscription of rich embroidury, wherein it is styled Medina.

in the Val di Mazara, standing on the sea at the extremity of a plain, which, from its peculiar form and exuberant fertility, is denominated the Vale of the Golden Shell. To a transalpine eye, unaccustomed to view nature in her wealthiest garb, nothing can present a more alluring spectacle: like an enchanted garden of the east, it is ornamented with the most beautiful flowers and rarest fruit trees, and strewed with innumerable odoriferous shrubs, the indigenous production of the soil, all of which receive freshness and fertility from a variety of limpid streams that flow from the hills with graceful sinuosities intersecting the vale below; whilst the many palaces and villas of the nobles, which every where spangle the plain, yield gaiety and animation to the scene.

On landing we proceeded to the Prince of Wales hotel, on the Piazza Marina, one of the only two habitable inns which the Sicilian capital can boast, where we were speedily accommodated to our wants or wishes; and, after a palatable meal, we sallied forth, under the auspices of a *soi-disant* sapient cicerone, to lionize the town, which, in its general outline, we found regular, well-built, and, I may say, handsome. It is enclosed by a thick though defenceless wall, intersected, at right angles, by the two principal streets, upwards of a mile in length, called the Cassaro* and Maqueda, but more commonly known by the Corso and Strada Nuova, which are terminated by four gates, with an octangular piazza, at the point of section, called I quattro Cantonieri. The Cassaro is the finest and most fashionable, as communicating with the palace; consequently made the corso, or promenade; and is, like the Toledo of Naples, every day, after dinner, (particularly the

* From the Saracenic word Cassar, a palace; the regal mansion of the Mahometan chiefs having originally stood at the end of this street.

jours de fête), crowded with an incongruous group of characters, of all nations and ranks, on foot, on horseback, or sitting, with an assumed stateliness, in any vehicle they can conscientiously dignify with the appellation of carrozza.

The town is extremely populous, containing nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants, and exhibits all the bustle, din, and confusion of its sister capital. It is particularly orderly by night, and the only one in Sicily well lighted at the public expense. The architecture is more remarkable for its strength than beauty, partaking much of that heavy style of the middle ages, with one peculiar characteristic, the remains, I suppose, of Moorish taste, namely, a semi-circular latticed guard, projecting from high attics, and seeming to form part of a heavy entablature. An abundant supply of water contributes to the health and cleanliness of the town, issuing from the copious streams of *jets d'eau* and fountains, the principal of which adorns the square in front of the Prætorian Palace*, and constitutes a great subject of Palermitan boast, though I was far from harmonizing in the eulogies I heard bestowed. It is profusely surcharged with an infinity of ill-disposed figures, (animals, river-gods, and nymphs), the principal merit of which consists rather in the labour they have cost, than the taste or excellence exhibited in their style and execution.

The public buildings are numerous, and many liberal institutions attest a more enlightened generation of Italians. Amongst the latter the University ranks high; it possesses a fine anatomical collection, and a valuable library of nearly thirty thousand volumes, besides manuscripts. On

* In the Prætorian Palace may be seen a variety of interesting inscriptions of antiquity, some valuable coins, vases, tablets, and other fragments, which, with a few specimens of ancient sculpture, will somewhat contribute to the gratification of antiquarian research.

the Piazza Marina is the hall of justice and custom-house, within the same building; the *ci-devant* tribunal of the Inquisition*; and in the Cassaro is the Jesuit's college, a large edifice, which contains also a valuable library, with schools for instruction in every department of learning.

The Porta Felice, a richly ornamented piece of modern architecture, opens from the Cassaro to the drive along the shore, called the Marina, which is undeniably one of the most beautiful drives or walks I ever beheld, excelling even the celebrated charms of the attractive Chiaja at Naples. It is protected, to the right and left, by luxuriant umbrageous trees, with the glittering waves of the Tyrhene Sea on one side, and the ivied walls of the town on the other; above which a long range of palaces stands towering with aristocratic pride to contrast their splendid magnificence. Here it is the whole populace of Palermo assemble during the evenings of the warmer seasons, to enjoy the refreshing luxury of the "mamaliti," or sea breeze, indulging, to a late hour, in the innocent gratifications that Punch, puppets, music, or amicable conversaziones can provide. At the eastern extremity is the Flora, the Kensington gardens of Palermo, which, though circumscribed, exhibits, in its plan, considerable taste as well as beauty: parterres of the choicest flowers extend in every direction to gratify the florists science, or regale the lounging *passans* with their odoriferous sweets; elegantly formed bowers offer

* This horrible institution was abolished, in 1794, by the memorable efforts of the philanthropic Carraciola, who also established the cemetry called the Campo Santo, at a distance from the town, and the present Golgotha of Palermo: like the cemetry of the Annunciata at Naples it contains almost a vault for every day in the year, one of which is constantly kept open for the reception of the dead, and closed at the expiration of twenty-four hours until the following year, when it is, by succession, again required.

shade and repose to the weary; tree-laced avenues, over-arched by the spreading boughs of the citron, lemon, and orange, invite the amatory pair to their solitary retreats; whilst, in a more secluded part, enclosed by appropriate characteristic trees of mourning, the literary enthusiast may contemplate the marbled epitaphs of Archimedes, Chirondas, Stesichorus, and Epicharmus: all of which is rendered complete by the refreshing streams from a variety of fountains, the largest of which is ornamented with an allegorical figure of Panormus standing surrounded by his attributes on a rock, with all the consciousness of ancestral fame.

Adjoining the Flora is an extensive botanical garden, liberally supported and well conducted; annexed to which, at the entrance, is a handsome classic building in the Grecian style though of Egyptian form, containing a library for botanical reference, and an elegant lecture room, lighted by a neat dome, and ornamented with statues appropriate to the place. What a mixed sensation of horror and delight I experienced when told these gardens, the generous institutions of science and pleasure, occupied the site from whence misery and ignorance once were spread abroad by the diabolical and desolating ceremonies of the inhuman inquisition.

Amongst the modern edifices of Palermo the churches occupy a formidable and conspicuous part, but whose exteriors, however, (with the exception of the cathedral), exhibit a discordant jumble of architecture without symmetry, unity of design, or the adherence to any one known order; their notoriety consisting principally in the richness of the materials that decorate their interior, which are almost invariably so injudiciously disposed, and in such gaudy profusion, as entirely to deprive them of every pre-

tension to beauty and effect; they are extremely numerous, and, notwithstanding their reputed splendour, they possess few claims on the admiration of those persons who have travelled through Italy, and run the gauntlet of church-visiting in Rome and Naples, where, independent of an equal display of costly material, the eye may be gratified with the superior productions of both painting and sculpture. At the same time let me caution the traveller against implicitly submitting (which is too frequently the case) to the opinions and reports of others. How often does it happen that the more capacious and discriminating mind is allowed to slumber in a state of inaction, by habitually yielding to the futile ideas of inferiors, when, by a little energy and activity, it might receive the conviction of error, and, at the same time, afford light and instruction to society? I strongly advocate the cultivation of an independent mind; let every one, by mature observation, learn to think for himself, and form a judgment of his own. I recommend no person to leave any place or thing unseen when time can be afforded; for I have ever found, however uninteresting objects may be thought, that, by association or reality, some information, some beneficial idea, will result from contemplation, more or less, to redeem the fatigue or time they have cost; independent of which, the reader will concur with me in observing, that the neglect of the most trifling object calls forth from our rival travellers the accusation of having overlooked that which is the *most interesting*, the *most captivating*, or the *most curious*.

The cathedral*, or Madre Chiesa, is of Norman gothic, built in the year 1185, on the foundations of an old church, by Archbishop Walter, of Palermo, under the patronage

* The cathedral in Sicily is generally termed the Madre Chiesa, (mother church), as in Italy it is denominated the Duomo.

and assistance of William the Good, King of Sicily; but, on account of the dilapidations caused by a succession of disastrous earthquakes, little remains of the original structure exceping the façade, which, with its richly chased spandrils, archivolt mouldings, spiral and clustered pillars, presents to the eye of the architectural critic a fine specimen of the growing style of the subsequently finished gothic. The interior consists of a nave separated from two side aisles by eighty Ionic columns, of oriental granite, inconsistently supporting Gothic arches. There are in it several chapels, remarkable for the riches they contain, or their religious importance in the estimation of the bigoted and superstitious enthusiast, particularly those of the Holy Sacrament and Santa Rosalia, the former of which is richly incrusted with the most beautiful lapis lazuli, and contains the valuable donations of devotees made to the holy shrine of the patron saint*; the latter is hallowed by the bones of

* Rosalia was the beautiful daughter of a Sicilian count, who, to preserve her chastity, and evade the brutality of the Saracens, retired to a grotto on the top of Mount Pelegrino, where her body, together with a tablet containing her history, were discovered, in 1624 (according to Monkish legends), through the medium of a vision to a Benedictine friar, at a period when the country was visited with a destructive plague, in which vision it was made known to the holy brother that until the bones of the chaste daughter had undergone the ceremony of sacred inhumation the plague would continue to rage with unabated vigour; consequently, they were immediately deposited, with funeral pomp, in the cathedral: the pestilence ceased, and sanctification established Rosalia the patroness of Palermo, which is solemnized every year, from the 9th to the 13th of July, by all the gorgeous pomp of Roman Catholic pageantry, accompanied with festivity, illuminations, fire-works of the most ingenious and beautiful species, and horse-racing through the Cassara, in the same style as those of Rome and Naples. But the principal and most remarkable object of this festival is the car of St. Rosalia, which is drawn in pompous procession through the streets by fifty oxen, accompanied with an excellent band of music, and almost an army of the civil and military

the sanctified virgin, the exhibition of which is deemed an effectual charm against plague, or any other national visitation.

In the choir are several boasted productions of the Messina sculptor Gaggini, the reputed Michael Angelo of Sicily, which, although not totally devoid of merit, do not entitle the author to so dignified a comparison: his figures are too short, and attitudes too forced and excessive, for the easy elegance of nature; whilst that energy of physical, as well as intellectual, expression is wanting, which so pre-eminently characterizes the efforts of his great prototype's chisel.

At the foot of the great altar repose the remains of the valorous Earl Roger, the conqueror of Sicily, and the terror of the Moslem arms; and, to the left, are enclosed the bodies of King Roger, the Emperor Frederick II.*, and Henry V., besides other kings and queens of Sicily, in

authorities, protecting a host of the sacerdotal tribe, who close the fête by a visit to the shrine of the saint on the mount. The car is of the most splendid kind, decorated with a variety of illustrative figures, and stands nearly seventy feet from the ground, bearing, on its summit, a handsome statue of the patroness.

* In 1781 the sarcophagus was opened, and the body of Frederick found, with an extraordinary appearance of freshness, covered with the following triple imperial dress: Alba, Dalmatia, and pluriale; the former was richly ornamented with embroidery and Arabic inscriptions in gold, and below the left shoulder a cross of red silk, emblematic of his crusade in Palestine. The Dalmatica was of green silk, the arms of which were covered with gold lace, two inches broad: the pluriale or mantle had a large gold clasp, ornamented in the centre with a rich amethyst, twenty small smaragdus round the circumference, and four immense pearls: the borders of the robe were enriched with a double row of pearls, and eagles embroidered in ornamental circles, turning their beaks towards each other, in pairs. Frederick was fond of oriental splendour; he spoke the Arabic, which, in his time, was a fashionable accomplishment, and introduced many Arabic customs, amongst them the amusement of heron hunting with hooded falcons.

three splendid porphery sarcophagi, with massive canopies of the same material, supported on columns of the most curious workmanship: they are of the highest antiquity, though it is unknown to what nation they originally belonged; two of them were placed, by King Roger, in the cathedral of Cefalo, in the year 1142, with a command that his body should, at his death, be placed in one at the foot of the altar: however, in the year 1186, Frederick had them transported to Palermo, the body of King Roger removed, with an order that, at his death, his own body, and that of his father, Arrigo, should be enclosed: such is the wayward will of unbridled power, always regardless of another's feeling, ever studying selfih ends.

Of the remaining churches, the Jesuit's ranks next in importance, exceeding in splendour all the rest; after which the Sta. Catalina, and the St. Simon and Benedict, with their annexed nunneries; the Dominican church, that of Saints Anne and Francis, (a convent of friars), and the church of Olivella, which is rendered worthy of remark by its beautiful altar of the crucifixion; here, too, the rational christian is called forth to contemplate, with unwilling sensations of disgust, the mummery of a store of relics that is occasionaly exhibited for the idolatry of a deluded race of Roman Catholic worshippers; some are set in diamonds, and others in a variety of expensive ways, all ticketed with a label of gold.

Palermo, I think, as a town, may be considered, in its present condition, more opulent and more flourishing than she has ever before been, during the most brilliant periods of her history, although, under the influence of a wiser and more liberal policy, she might still experience an unbounded increase of prosperity. No vestiges can be traced of its ancient beauty or magnificence; and we in vain look for

the substructions of theatres, temples, or basilicæ—the almost invariable indications of Roman or of Grecian abode.

The attention of strangers is, generally speaking, early directed to the convent of Capuchins, which is about a mile from the Porta Nuova, or east gate. It is well endowed, and has a comfortable table every day open for a certain number of nobles who are reduced to want; but is curious for the disposal and arrangement of the remains of the departed fraternity, which are placed in a double row of niches, through four long subterraneous corridors, suspended, by the neck, in their monastic garb, with a label, containing the name, age, and period of decease. At one end is an altar incrusted with teeth, bones, and sculls, that are inlaid in the style of mosaic work; and, at the other, a drying-room for the preparation of the bodies that are to be exposed; whilst, along the flooring lie piles of coffers, containing the bodies of deceased gentlemen or nobles of Palermo, who have purchased a place for the repose of their mortal part: the cases are closed with locks, and the keys kept by the family or friends, who occasionally come to shed a tributary tear over the relations they have lost.

The palace of the viceroy stands at the end of the Cassaro, by the eastern gate, on a strong artificial foundation, first laid by the Saracens in 814, A. D., (when they took Palermo), on the ruins of the old fortress, which before them had been so bravely defended by the Phœnicians, Chaldeans, Greeks, Romans, Vandals, and Goths. They strengthened it, and established within its walls the royal mansion of the infidel chief, the Emir Chbiz, governor of the Sultan of Egypt; but nothing now remains of the Mahomedan edifice, it having been since razed, altered, and rebuilt by a succession of kings and viceroys: however, the greater proportion of the present building, with the

little church of St. Peter, and its beautiful crypt*, were raised by King Roger, and the two Williams, his son and grandson, who contributed all its richness and magnificence, about the commencement of the twelfth century. Its exterior is far from denoting a royal residence, though within it is adorned with a splendid suite of apartments, and an armory which contains, besides many other curious antiquities, the desolating sword of Count Roger, and two of the four celebrated rams, made of rich Syracusan bronze, by the memorable genius of Archimedes, who placed them on the gates of Tyche, to designate the cardinal points. On the summit of that part erected by King Roger, called the Torre Greca, is established an observatory, where the unremitted labours of an eminent astronomer, named Piazza, have been crowned by several most important discoveries in the science. On the right hand of the staircase, descending towards the church, is a stone with inscriptions, in Latin, Greek, and Saracenic, to record the introduction of a clock made by a Saracen, under the direction of Count Roger. The one in Latin is to the following effect:—"This clock was caused to be made by the great King Roger, in the year of the incarnation of Christ, 1142, the fifth of the month of March, and the thirteenth year of his reign."

Those in Greek and Arabic, thus:—"Oh! new and wonderful spectacle! the great Lord King Roger having received the sceptre from God, governs the flow of movable substance, by distributing the knowledge of the hours of time free from sin: the fifth of the month of March, 1142, and thirteenth year of his happy reign."

On the seventeenth the sun rose in beauty, and we de-

* The crypt, with its rich mosaics and ornamental marble work, afford a fine example of the luxury and taste which characterized the Norman architecture of that early age.

parted on a pilgrimage to the chapel of Santa Rosalia, erected on the summit of Monte Pelegrino, over the grotto, where, tradition says, she died: it is held in profound veneration by the lower orders of Palermitans, and is adorned with a bronze statue of the patroness, in a recumbent posture, which is clothed in a gaudy glittering raiment of silver, surrounded by votive offerings of the superstitious tribe who resort to the sainted shrine. It is about a mile and three quarters from the gates of the town to the foot of the hill, from whence a zig-zag road has been cut, and formed on arches over numerous fissures, which affords easy access to the mountain's top: beyond the chapel, on a high rock, is the telegraph, and near it the remains of an ancient tower, called the Torre de Corsari, which served, in the middle ages, the purposes of a watch tower, and to warn the inhabitants of the surrounding country, on the approach of corsairs and barbarians, by lighting fires during the night, which were seen at a considerable distance. Monte Pelegrino* is an immense mass of rock, nearly two thousand feet above the level of the sea, from which it rises almost in a perpendicular line. It was called by the ancient Grecks, η Ερκτη; by the Romans, Mons Cratas; and, by the Saracens, Belgrin; signifying the neighbouring mountain, hence corrupted into the present appellation of Pelegrino. It is composed principally of lime-stone, with a thick stratum at the base of beautifully perfect specimens of marine fossil shells of various species. On the top of this mountain the celebrated Carthaginian general, Hamilcar Barras, established himself, towards the end of the first Punic war, and where he gave to the world the most undeniable

* This mountain is, in the months of May and June, frequented by myriads of quails, which afford both sport and profit to the amateurs of the neighbourhood.

proofs of his military genius, by the unparalleled skill and audacious bravery, with which he sustained a war of nearly three years against the combined armies of the Romans and Grecians, now besieging, now besieged, alternately suffering and inflicting dearth with a degree of desperation and energy that is difficult to describe, until the fatal defeat of the Carthaginian fleet off Lilybeo, by which he was deprived of all hopes of support, and reduced to the galling necessity of suing for a peace on those humiliating terms which obliged the Carthaginians to evacuate the whole island, and thus made half Sicily a Roman province.

On descending, we visited the Favorita*, a fanciful casino, belonging to the viceroy, situated about two miles and a half from the town, built in a curious indefinable style, intended to represent a Chinese edifice: it contains a variety of apartments, decorated to suit the taste of almost all nations, one of which is singularly constructed, in imitation of a subterranean vault, to yield refreshing airs during the summer heats: the surface of the walls is irregular and humid, with a number of cooling plants, shooting their dewy leaves through interstices, like the vegetable offspring of a fountain grotto. The grounds are fantastically distributed, and intersected with excellent straight roads, bounded to the right and left with forest or fruit trees, plantations, and gardens, laid out according to the rules of Dutch formality, with, in one part, a Chinese pagoda, rising up from the centre of a species of labyrinth.

There is a prodigious quantity of game within the enclosure, but it is most strictly preserved, and frequently sent in great profusion to supply the royal larder at Naples.

* In a dining-room there is a table communicating with the kitchen beneath by apertures, through which the dinner is sent up at the call of the royal host, and is intended to obviate the necessity of servants' presence.

Returning from the Favorita we were prevented the further continuance of our researches by an engagement we had faithfully promised to fulfil at the hospitable board of Mr. W——d, a resident English merchant and banker, to whom we had been introduced by recommendatory letters, and had travelled with in the steam-boat from Naples: his villa is situated near the one of Prince Butera, in a most delicious and enjoyable part of the valley, commanding a prospect of the town, the luxuriant environs, and the deep cerulean waters of the crescented bay. We spent an agreeable evening of sociable festivity, that amply redeemed the suspension of our antiquarian pursuits: indeed, such was the courteous hospitality and kindness we experienced from him, as well as many others of the English residents with whom we became acquainted, that I shall never recur to my visit at Palermo but with feelings of the most grateful rememberance.

In order to avail ourselves of the fast expiring period of our limited stay within the "Happy City"*, we set out again early the following morning on an excursion to Mon Reale, Carini, and St. Martino. Quiting the town by the Porta Nuova, we passed through a part of the enchanting Conca d'Oro, which I have before so vainly endeavoured to describe, until our progress was arrested by a visit to the remains of two Saracenic edifices, called the Kubba and Ziza or Zizza, as it is now more generally styled, which lie within half a mile of each other, and about one from the town.

The Kubba†, (which in Arabic signifies a vaulted palace),

* Every city in Sicily is denominated by some peculiar epithet, illustrative of the merits or demerits that characterize their locality or inhabitants: hence, on account of the amenity and fertility of Palermo, it has received the agnomen of "Felice."

† The Kubba, a corruption of the Arabic word Kaaba.

is now called Castel Reale, and converted into barracks, possessing few marks of its ancient Moorish character; even the Arabic inscription round the summit is now decayed and illegible. In its brilliant days, under the Moslem kings, it was surrounded with every species of horticultural beauty that could minister to the luxurious wants and pleasures of the most fastidious imagination; in the centre of which was an immense piscina, encircled with massive walls, whose form and extent may still be traced, and attest a much higher antiquity than the Mahomedan era, consequently has lead to the very probable suggestion of a Roman naumachia.

The Ziza* is the most curious, most uniform, and, at the same time, the most perfect structure of the two, having experienced little or no alteration since it was erected by the Moorish emirs in the ninth century, and is at the present moment the residence of a Palermitan prince. It is a quadriform stone edifice of three stories, having windows and doors of the pointed arch, ornamented with mullions and tracery, surmounted by battlements, on each of which there is a single letter of the Cuffic alphabet, forming altogether a Saracenic inscription, whose interpretation, however, I could no where obtain a sufficiently satisfactory account of to attempt describing. Refreshing streams discharge themselves from an elegant fountain, into a marble basin in the centre of the entrance hall, which is vaulted with frosted ceilings, richly decorated with finished drops, and highly wrought pendentives. Originally the walls were covered with Arabic inscriptions, and mosaics, according to the Moorish custom; the whole forming a most luxurious retreat and very much resembling those oriental

* Azziza signifies in Arabic, dear, very fine, or beautiful.

summer-houses, called kioschks, particularly in Persia, where the wealthy chieftians have a particular fondness for the luxurious distribution of cooling streams through their houses and gardens; hence the curious author of the Koran promises to all true believers, in the world to come, the enjoyment of delightful gardens through which refreshing streams shall flow.

The contemplation of this building, which is coeval with the Alhambra of Grenada, and the Moorish mosque of Cordova, more strongly confirmed me in the opinion which I have always nurtured, in opposition to the many discussions of erudite travellers and the numberless suggestions of architectural writers; namely, that the style called Gothic solely owes its birth to that of the Saracenic, and justly derives its appellation from the Goths*, who first established christianity throughout Spain, and raised, at the revival of their power, churches in that style, on the ruins of the Saracenic mosques; in which idea I cannot help flattering myself I shall be borne out by such of my readers as will, without prejudice, consider the matter, and devote a little attention to the circumstances connected with this subject, derivable from Saracenic, French, and Spanish history.

In the first place, when the followers of Mahomed, at the close of the seventh century, had, by dint of that fervid enthusiasm which so peculiarly distinguished the propagation of their faith, succeeded in so widely extending the Mussulmanic doctrine, it is, I presume, generally known that they studiously cultivated forms and habits entirely

* It was under the great and wise Recared that christianity, according to the creed of Rome, was generally disseminated throughout Spain, and became the prevailing faith of the Gothic invaders, in spite of a powerful arian faction established by his predecessor.

peculiar to themselves, and, in consequence, invented a new style of architecture, that might be deemed worthy of distinguishing the sainted depositories of their new faith, and of transmitting to after ages the memory of its great author, their prophet.

With a combination of parts, therefore, deduced from almost all the orders then known to them; namely, the round arch of the Romans; the three columns of the Grecians; the pointed arch, tracery, and open lattice-work of the Chinese, Hindoos, and Persians; the spiral pillar and horse-shoe form, (which they adopted for the pediments of doorways and cupolas), from the Egyptians; all of which, added to a few combinations of their own, they united into a regulated ensemble, and raised according to its rules, a multiplicity of religious structures throughout every country they allured, or rather obliged, to embrace their fanatic creed.

It was introduced into Europe on the Moorish conquest of Spain; an era of war, bloodshed, and infidelity; and one of the most astonishing political revolutions that is recorded in history.

At the commencement of the eighth century, the Moslem horde entered the country on its southern shores; and in the incredibly short space of two years, concluding with the fatal and sanguinary struggle of Xeres, the whole territory of Spain was laid prostrate, and christianity annihilated by the overwhelming invocations of the Mahomedan impostor; for whose worship sanctuaries sprung up, and exhibited, for the first time in Europe, this novel style of architecture, which, according to the progress of improvement in the arts, after a series of years received more splendid forms, until it acquired that costly magnificence and perfection so beautifully illustrated in the many re-

mains of Moorish mosques and palaces still extant in Spain.

But a happy period was yet reserved, when christians and christianity should again raise their heads in triumph over the infidel race and their unhallowed doctrine. A brave and illustrious band of fugitive Goths, who, in the mountain fastnesses of the Asturias, under the influence of free air of independence, having uncorruptedly preserved their ancient habits, and nourished the true spirit of Christ, descended* from the craggy abodes into the plains, against the enemies of their creed, under the intrepid leader, Pelagius, who, with his valorous companions, fortified with the love of freedom and their faith, fought with unparalleled desperation, everywhere scattering destruction and dismay amongst the host of turbaned warriors they opposed; and, by a series of successful warfare, during a period of nineteen years, paved the way for the subsequent restoration of the christian religion, and the Gothic kings, who, in the middle of the eighth century, had already succeeded in prescribing bounds to the ambitious usurpations of the Moors; and in proportion as the infidels were driven from their holds, so did the pious zeal of Alphonso the Catholic cause new churches to be built on the ruins of their numerous mosques, in the erecting of which christian architects borrowed somewhat from their Moslem brethren, particularly the pointed arch and tracery, which, in its rudest style, subsequently so characterised their religious edifices.

From Spain it passed into France, under the appellation of Gothic, through the medium of the Normans, an enterprising and industrious people, who, after their conversion to christianity, became a most devoutly religious nation,

* A. D. 718.

notoriously addicted to ecclesiastical architecture, which in their zeal they gradually beautified and improved according to the new ideas they received from the shrines and temples of all the countries they were at that period in the habit of visiting.

Amongst their earliest productions in that style are the cathedral of Chartres * and the church of the monastery of Clugny; but richer and more ornamental parts became progressively added, until, by the united efforts of all the Norman architects, it acquired that characteristic beauty and graceful elegance so exclusively peculiar to the pointed or Gothic order, which existed in its greatest perfection about that period when our English kings held dominion over the fair provinces of Normandy: hence then its introduction and rapid progress throughout England, which abounds in its richest and most beautiful specimens.

The sudden change from the Roman† to the Gothic

* The original church being destroyed by lightning, the present cathedral was built under the directions of bishop Fuller, by Norman architects, in the year 1020, and principally at the expense of Richard Duke of Normandy; and many of the same style were afterwards caused to be built by Robert King of France. It must be observed, however, that the great entrance and two steeples of Chartres cathedral are of rather a later period than the rest of the building. The abbey of Clugny was commenced by a Norman monk in 1093, at the expense of Alphonso king of Spain, but not finished until 1131.

† In England, previous to the conquest, a corrupted style of Roman prevailed, consisting of short round pillars, with rude capitals and bases supporting circular arches, introduced by the Roman missionaries after the conversion of the Saxons, to whom (instead of their own heathen temples) they recommended churches built "after the Roman manner," which became adopted and continued until the conquest; when the Norman abbots and prelates (who were most indefatigable and ingenious architects, and well skilled in the science) introduced a variety of new alterations and improvements, particularly a more delicate pillar, and a series of small round arches made to intersect each other, &c. &c. Their

throughout Europe (for which we are exclusively indebted to the piety of the Normans), is, generally speaking, supposed to have been simultaneous, and asserted to have been brought from the Holy Land during the first crusade, by a body of architects, who, on their return, introduced the style to their respective native countries. Nothing, however, can be more erroneous, since churches were built according to Gothic rule in Europe long antecedent to that period; and furthermore, its advancement from one country to another, if traced with necessary accuracy and judgment, will be found to have proceeded as progressively, (though with rapidity), and with the same regularity, by imitation, as the dissemination of any other newly-discovered branch of art.

Its apparently contemporaneous adoption may probably be accounted for by that zealous enthusiasm for raising churches which marked the growing prevalence of christianity in Europe from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, and occasioned a species of competition amongst the ecclesiastical bodies of different nations, from whence re-

efforts were incessant, and not without success, since their churches excelled all others in that age for beauty or form. They expended immense sums in erecting, rebuilding, and decorating almost all the cathedral or conventual churches of England; and about the twelfth century brought over from their own country the new pointed style, called Gothic, which from that period kept pace with the improvements of the Norman inventors, and assumed three marked characters, known by the forms of the arch, and other alterations that distinguished the ages of their adoption, namely, the first order was the acute or double lancet arch, sometimes highly wrought with tracery: such are the cathedrals of Lincoln, Salisbury, and Beverly, which prevailed from the twelfth to the end of the thirteenth century. The second order is distinguished by its perfect equilateral arch, which continued from the latter period to the middle of the fifteenth century: of such are York Minster, Winchester, and Canterbury: to which succeeded the compressed or obtuse arch, with the overloaded ornaments that accompanied it.

sulted the rapidity of its adoption, as well as the beauty of style, which continued increasing in superadded ornaments until the fifteenth century, when, on account of its exuberance, it received the epithet of "florid." Such are the cathedrals of Milan and Cologne, the Carthusian monastery at Pavia, St. George's, Windsor, King's College chapel, Cambridge, and Henry the Seventh's chapel, Westminster.

On quitting the Zizza we proceeded to Mon Reale, which lies about three miles and a half from Palermo. It is situated on the brow of a sterile mountain called Caputo *, and hemmed in by a lofty range of hills, excepting towards the north, which commands a splendid view of the plain, the distant metropolis, and the Tyrrhene sea. On approaching it at a short distance, it appears as if rising out of a richly wooded grove of olive and orange trees. An excellent winding road, full of picturesque objects and scenic beauties, made by the public-spirited archbishop Testa, affords easy access from the foot of the hill to the town: it is supported on the sides by walls and buttresses, and ornamented with a variety of inscriptions, urns, and refreshing fountains, on the sparkling bosom of whose springs lie floating numerous vegetable productions of the aqueous tribe, amongst which the bright-leaved lotus and the lily seem to shine as the presiding tenants of the stream.

The town owes its rise to a Benedictine convent, built by Count Roger, and to the present cathedral, which was attached to it in the year 1172 by the pious William II. †

* On the summit of Monte Caputo, which overlooks the town, there is an old tower erected by the Saracenic chief Bulcar, on the ruins of an ancient christian church and convent, traces of which may still be seen.

† From the frequent visits of William the Good, and his erection of the church, was derived the merited appellation of Monte Reale, and

surnamed the Good, which, on account of the reverential devotion it excited by its magnitude, and then esteemed splendour of architecture, as well as the salubrity and amenity of its situation, attracted a rapid augmentation of residents around the holy shrine; and in process of time became a place of great consideration, soon after a bishoprick, and is now the seat of an archbishop, with a population of twelve thousand souls.

The cathedral *, as I have just observed, was erected at an enormous expense by William, and though fine and imposing in the general mass, will not bear the test of modern architectural scrutiny, nor comparison with the contemporary structures of his Norman brethren in France. It is a bad style of Saracenic, being an incongruous mixture of a variety of orders; for instance, pointed arches supported by Grecian columns on heavy bases or pedestals. The Gothic incrustation of mosaic is greatly admired by Sicilian amatures of art; however, I think it produces a sombre appaarance, and the effect of heaviness, which invariably destroys architectural beauty. Here the remains of the royal founder, as well as those of his father, William the Bad, were deposited in two rich porphery sarcophagi, also the intestines of St. Lewis, who died in his zealous pursuit of the first holy war. Many valuable antiquities have been taken from this church since the destructive fire of 1811, by which they were totally ruined or irreparably injured. The paintings that cover the walls are none of them

not, as has been suggested, from the Saracenic Monrahal; for the Moors only occupied the summit of the mountain above-mentioned, which they called Bulcar, after their chief.

* The beautiful gallery of the adjoining convent, the cloisters, and the excessively fine view from the terrace, may be deemed well worthy of observation.

chefs d'œuvre of the art, although a martyrdom of St. Placido, by Novelli, is unmeritedly held up to the admiring gaze of those who can be persuaded to esteem its author as the Raphael of his day: the colouring is intolerably vapid, the design incorrect, the expression unmeaning, and seems really to possess no other claim to merit than the ingenuity of its composition, consequently it does in no way entitle the author to be designated as the head of any school of painting, which I have in one or two works seen the name of Novelli * dignified with.

From Mon Reale we proceeded on mules to the celebrated convent of St. Martino, which lies about three miles and a half north-west from its gates: the road runs through a line of singularly picturesque mountains, checquered with little cultivated patches, and spotted with groupes of mountain shrubs, and the silver olive, here and there broken by rocks, declivities, and precipices, well calculated for the gloomy tales of romance, or the wild pencil of a Salvator Rosa. We passed the ruins of a Moorish castle, rearing its tottering walls on the summit of a craggy height, (the one seen from the gates of Palermo), and shortly afterwards descended by a gradual undulation of hills into a small solitary dell, encircled by a chain of rude and rugged mountains, at whose base, in a secluded recess, is situated the luxurious retreat of the followers of St. Benedict. It consists of a square building of three stories, surmounted by a turret with dome and cross, and a wing on each side, behind which is annexed the church of St. Martin, that gave rise to the appellation of the establishment. All was silence and tranquillity as we advanced towards the holy dwelling; not even the shadow of a human being was visible around,

* Surnamed Morrealese.

until approaching the half-closed portals of the church, we discovered the whole fraternity engaged in the ceremonies of high mass. We immediately entered with the reverence and respect due to their rites and to a chistian temple, and I shall never forget the impressive effect of religious solemnity I at that moment experienced, caused by a sudden burst of voices from the choral chaunt of monks who had just commenced that sublime and heart-moving composition, the *Te Deum* of Graum, accompanied by the powerful, yet mellifluous tones of an incomparably fine organ the richness of whose expressive swells and general execution readily announced the scientific skill of a master-hand. The sacerdotal paraphernalia of the officiating priests exhibited a degree of costliness that might compete with the papal splendor of the Sistine chapel, though somewhat inconsistent with the humble pretensions of the pious founder of their order.

The choir is remarkable for the most exquisitely executed carved work in walnut wood, that adorns it, and which presents a fine specimen of the wonderful degree of perfection to which the art of carving may attain. Round the church many moderately-executed productions of painting and sculpture may be seen which record the deeds of sacred history or the memory of sainted mortals. After the service, one of the monks, with a great deal of courteous civility, conducted us through the church and its subterraneous apartments, namely, the cryptic chapel and cemetry; the former is neat, though marked with the gloominess of a sepulchral vault, and is devoted to private masses; the latter, like the Capuchin dormitory of the dead at Palermo, preserves the remains of the deceased monks, who are exposed in the most ludicrous attitudes round its obnoxious aisles, from whose unpleasing spectacle we gladly returned,

and entered the convent through a magnificent hall which led by a splendid marble staircase to the spacious galleries and chambers above, all presenting an appearance of princely luxury and magnificence, furnishing another of the innumerable proofs of that *simplicity* and *self-denial* we are, generally speaking, taught to believe are the prominent characteristics of the humble votaries of monastic life. The library is a fine, noble apartment, supported by beautifully carved Corinthian pillars of walnut, contains a valuable collection of books, manuscripts, &c., and, like the principal corridor, is hung with pictures, and paved with glazed tiles of various colours.

The church was built about the middle of the twelfth century, by the pious spirit of Pietro Indulfo, who dedicated it to St. Martin, and attached it to the church of Mon Reale, under the patronage of King William the Good; but it was shortly afterwards given by the Archbishop Emanuel to the Benedictine monks, on the following conditions: that they should annex to it a monastery, from whence the resident brethren were to come every year on the holy feast of the Virgin's Nativity, in solemn procession, with lighted candles in their hands, to the cathedral of Mon Reale; in consequence of which the present edifice was erected at a great expense from the funds of the opulent fraternity, which, like that of Catania, only admits nobles, half of whom are now laymen, though *all, we must suppose,* warmly devoted to the labours of an useful and a pious life. Few trees or even shrubs are to be seen within this sequestered glen, excepting those around the convent and in an extensive luxuriant garden which the industry of ages has accomplished in spite of the sterile rock on which it is planted.

Time slipped away as we gathered information from the

communicative brothers of the cowl, and we were obliged rather abruptly to bid adieu to its cloistered walls and solitary vale, from which, after the usual valedictory observances, we emerged by a winding craggy path, and as we slowly ascended the heights, the lugubrious toll of the convent bell echoed along the hills, and dwelt with a pleasing melancholy on the ear, until we reached the distant range which we traversed through a rugged picturesque country, and soon descended into the fertile plain of Carini, where, in a clean little town of the same name, an astonishingly numerous population breathe in health and contentment the salubrious air of the beautiful eminence on which it stands. The town is about fifteen miles from Palermo, and four from the sea, and as usual in Sicily, has a number of religious edifices, with a fine old strong tower, not of Gothic, or Saracenic production, as sometimes intimated, but the baronial fortress of Manfredi Chiaramontano, whose arms it bears. The plain is luxuriantly productive, watered by a variety of fountains and springs, besides a small river which brings richness and fertility from the hills, and once ministered its refreshing streams to the inhabitants of the opulent but unfortunate Hyccara *, a Sicanian town, which stood upon its banks about a mile from the sea, and enjoyed, in the early ages of Sicily, the prosperity of undisturbed commerce, until the arrival † of the Athenian expedition, the year 416 B. C., under the feeble conduct of Nicias, who sacked it, bore off a great part of the inhabitants as slaves, and gave the remainder, with the town, to the city of Egesta; after which history is totally silent as to its fate, and now scarcely a stone remains to identify the site

* τα Υκκαρα of the Greeks. † Thucydides and Diodorus.

it even occupied. Such is the destiny of man, such the evanescent existence of human works, when divine authority decrees their fall!

This was the birth place of the far-famed Lais *, who, yet a child, together with the other prisoners of Nicias, was carried to Catana, where they were sold into slavery by public auction, and the lovely Sicel maid became the property of a Corinthian merchant, in after years the wonder and admiration of man, the envy of woman, and the theme of song.

The destruction of Hyccara and the levying of thirty talents on the city of Egesta, proved the only solitary boast of the Athenian general in this first ill-judged expedition of Athens against the colonies of Sicily. No advantages accrued to the state, no laurels crowned their general's brow; for the valiant but unfortunate Nicias, baffled by the treacherous promises of the Egestans, led his disappointed army through the country of the Sicels to the eastern extremity of the island, where they ultimately fell a prey to pestilence, famine, and defeat, thus affixing an indelible stain on the glory of the Athenian arms, the affecting and disastrous details of which are pathetically recorded by the elegant and energetic pen of Thucydides.

About three miles from hence stands the beautiful little town of La Favarotto, situated on a gentle rise near the sea, and is more attractive probably for the charms of its locality and the beauty of the surrounding plain; fine tall olives yield shade and riches to the soil, the gracefully

* Athenæus says her beauty was so great, that painters came at a great expense from distant countries to take her bust, for the purpose of introducing in their pictures; and that the celebrated painter, Apelles, stood motionless with admiration on accidentally seeing her once at a fountain.

branching carob contrasts the richness of its bright dark green, and in spite of the contiguity of the briny waters, an innumerable variety of particularly beautiful shrubs and flowers spring up in every direction to enliven and adorn the scene. We proceeded homewards by a less mountainous, though longer and more rugged path, with the bay of Carini to our left, terminated at the eastern extremity by the little islet of Femi (or, as it is now corrupted, Delle Femine), which is merely an isolated rock, with a Saracenic tower, and only rendered remarkable by an instance of ignorance and superstition of the sixteenth century, namely, the execution of a political *intriguant*, who on this island fell a cruel victim to the accusation of sorcery. The coast, as we learned from our intelligent guide, is all the way along, and particularly in the vicinity of Capo di Gallo, celebrated for many curious and immense caverns, made frequently the habitations of shepherds who lead a life of primitive simplicity within their subterranean apartments; but the lateness of the hour prevented our exploring their singular recesses. I could not help observing how largely the road and country over which we were then passing partook of the same primitive state; the hand of man seemed never to have approached its soil, though in the days of earlier ages it has successively exhibited a scene of industry, population, and warfare. From the stony nature of its superstratum, and the consequent annoyance it causes to horses, the whole region has received the appropriate epithet of Sferra Cavalli. It was late at night before we reached the capital, and the latter part of our ride was rendered unpleasant by the unwelcome arrival of the sirocco, a wind whose effects on the moral as well as physical system are indescribable to those who have never experienced its saturnine influence; it is more violent here (though of

which scarcely merit the epithet, since they are totally incapable of furnishing wherewith to compose a decent meal, and rarely the accommodation of a bed suited to the use of civilized beings, such things being never required by the general frequenters of those inhospitable abodes, namely muleteers, who carry their own provisions, and usually sleep in the stable by the side of their goods, under the faithful guardianship of a dog. However, these difficulties and inconveniencies may be alleviated by obtaining letters of recommendation to the different monastic establishments, which are invariably to be found in or near every tavern and village of the island, and not only secure to the traveller hospitable reception and good cheer, but the additional advantage of frequently learned information; in such cases pecuniary compensation is, generally speaking, expected, and, I may venture to say, as often most willingly contributed by the guests who have the good fortune to gain access to their dwellings.

CHAPTER II.

20th November, 1824.

At seven in the morning, the arrival of our steeds and guide announced the hour of departure, the former of which, like Quixote's rosinante, neither boasted the costliness of their caparison or the effects of easy labour and good living; whilst an athletic form and robust health bespoke the better usage of the latter, a youth of thirty years, whose generous countenance, smiling under the folds of a newly blanched night cap, seemed to guarantee the faithful services of a trustworthy guide: a sumpter mule bore our baggage and provisions, and we quitted the town by the Porta Nuova, proceeding at an easy pace of three miles per hour through the valley of Palermo, at the end of which the road ascends the mountains, and passes through a narrow defile of steep, rugged, rocky hills, which immediately arrest the attention of the military observer, as possessing powerful means of defence against the attacks of a foreign enemy. The termination of this defile opens into a hilly country, consisting principally of corn lands and pasture, which, from the time of year, and the want of those divisions that constitute the principal ornament of cultivated scenery, offer nothing to the eye of the picturesque or beautiful, yet are not totally devoid of attractions for those who love nature in her simplest forms. The land appeared clean though rudely farmed, and the grain was all in the ground for the following spring, which, however, a long draught threatened a total destruction of, and caused general gloom amongst, the poor cultivators of the hills. Between here and Alcamo

shorter duration) than I ever felt it in any part of Italy; the period of its continuance is irregular, but seldom attains three days, which in summer is, notwithstanding, almost annihilation to a transalpine constitution. It is the λιψ of the Greeks, and the Africus Ventus of the Romans; it blows, generally speaking, from the coast of Africa, between the south and east-south-east points of the compass, and is the same wind which produces such destructive influence in the desarts, dispossessed, however, of its most obnoxious qualities, by a passage over the sea; yet in traversing the island, it seems again to recover a proportion of its malignity, and to concentrate all its powers within the vale of Palermo, where it becomes more insupportable, and is more severely felt than in any other part of Sicily. It dims the whole atmosphere with suffocating, burning, misty vapours, which enervate alike the animal as the vegetable world, and cause a depression of spirits during its stay quite intolerably disagreeable. In the hot weather the inhabitants altogether avoid exposing themselves to the external air, close every door and window, and keep their apartments refreshed by the frequent sprinkling of water: however, from all the information I could obtain on the subject, it seems productive of no diseases, but rather favourable than otherwise to cutaneous affections.

With the fame of Syracuse, alluring the imagination, and the temples of Agrigentum rearing their massive columns in our minds eye, together with many other interesting sites of antiquity, that hung like the spell of enchantment round our necks, we experienced a sort of yearning to set out in quest of their sacred remains, consequently made active preparations for our departure on the following morning. The preparations necessary for a journey in Sicily are of no unimportant nature, since the traveller

cannot, as in England, jump into a coach in the morning, and after traversing a distance of a hundred miles before seven o'clock in the evening, find himself in the quiet possession of a comfortable inn, a clean bed, and a salutary meal. The roads there, very unlike the paths of human beings, are little better than goat tracks, and do not offer much choice as to the means of travelling, which are limited to riding on mules or in the lettiga, a vehicle perfectly resembling a rude species of Brighton or Cheltenham fly, suspended like a sedan chair, between two poles, on the backs of a couple of mules, one behind the other before. The motion is irregular and disagreeable beyond description, attended at the same time with considerable danger of upsetting, if not driven with the greatest care over craggy and uneven ground, and particularly along the edges of precipices, where a false step would hurl the whole establishment into the plain below, in spite of the sure-footedness of the beasts that usually bear them. Therefore, after due consideration, we determined on hiring mules as the more preferable and independent mode of conveyance; besides which, what is infinitely more essential to the tourist, he can uninterruptedly gaze around him, and dwell at leisure on the prospects he beholds without the intervention of pannels, dirty curtains, and the intollerable nuisance of a small window, which on the occurrence of any remarkable objects or scenery, occasions an incessant interchange of most inconvenient courtesy.

Travelling too in Sicily is attended with a variety of other inconveniences, particularly to those persons who are more devoted to the consideration of physical comforts and luxury than intellectual gratification; for, excepting at two or three of the larger towns of the island, few inns are to be met with beyond the halting places of muleteers,

is the only part of Sicily where the dairy is cultivated; the butter is delicious and is principally taken to Palermo for sale, where we were, previously to quitting, advised to lay in a supply, which proved one of the greatest necessaries during our tour, particularly as good bread may generally be found at the smallest village, whilst the former is not to be obtained even at the largest towns. Seven miles and a half from Palermo, a rugged, though termed a good, mule path leads from the high road about a mile and a half to the temple and ancient site of Segesta, which, as we approached, the tardy pace of our steeds permitted us to contemplate at leisure the venerable pile as it rose with imposing grandeur to our view. It stands on the declivity of an eminence in the centre of a vale hemmed in by a line of sterile hills, excepting to the north, from whence it is ventilated by the invigorating freshness of the sea breeze; all is barrenness around, no annual crops spring up to crown the labourers toil, no hospitable thickets clothe the mountain sides, and the deserted wilderness seems to exhibit a scene of melancholy solitude in sympathy with the fallen greatness of the once powerful Segesta, whose disastrous tale is left to be told by one solitary, yet interesting and impressive memorial.

We alighted, and quickly found ourselves within the venerable fane, whose massive proportions, austere simplicity, and perfect symmetry, wrested from us the immediate acknowledgment of most unequivocal superiority in the style and taste of ancient art.

It is a pararellogramic periptera of the doric order, containing thirty-six columns, having thirteen at the sides and six at the ends, including the angular ones in both directions; the shafts are composed of four pieces, and, very unlike those of Pæstum and Agrigentum, are not fluted,

TEMPLE OF CERES SEGESTA.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY LIBRARY

though much longer, and taper away without any swell, from a diameter of four feet and a quarter under the ovolo to six feet at their base, terminating at each extremity by an intaglio for the insertion of bronze astragals; they rest on one common plinth, which, being cut through, in all the intercolumniations of the fronts and the last of each flank, gives the appearance of socles or bases to the columns*. The entablature is perfect, and the two pediments also (with the exception of a few stones of their cornice) seem to have resisted the desolating hand of time. The interior is perfectly clear, and without a cella, which strongly attests the original unfinished state of the edifice, probably suspended by the exterminating wars of the Carthaginians†. The general form is graceful and elegant, being one hundred and seventy feet in length, seventy-six feet broad, and forty feet high in the fronts, built of a porous concretion of marine substances mixed with calcareous matter of a dingy brown cast; its entrance, as may be traced, was to the east, but obscurity hangs over alike the period as the object of its erection, unless it is the temple Cicero and Dyonisius of Halicarnassus mention, which was raised in the days of Egestan prosperity to the memory of Æneas, for whom they established honours and the celebration of divine ceremonies.

A short distance from the temple we traced the sub-

* The stones of the architrave are worthy of remark for their enormous dimensions; they are ten feet in length, supported by two columns with intervening blocks between the ends.

† Having experienced some slight damage by earthquake, the temple was repaired by Ferdinand in the year 1781. It is generally called a temple of Ceres, because the ancients, from an old superstitious custom, used to build their temples dedicated to Ceres outside the town, where the one of Egesta is supposed to stand eastward of the old walls. The restoration is commemorated by the following inscription. Ferdinandi regio Augustissimi Providentia. Restituit anno MDCCLXXXI.

structions of an amphitheatre; little however remains of any interest but its form, which denotes the position of the spectators and the beautiful prospect they commanded of a distant sea, an object highly calculated to compose the mind when not engaged in the more alluring scenes of their exhibitions; a little farther we observed two immense cylindrical fragments, apparently the parts of columns, together with numerous scattered remains of architectural materials, which now lie almost buried in the soil. The Scamander meandered through the plains below, whose stream we approached with classic interest, and lingered with melancholy recollection over its once populous banks, now endeared to the page of history by the deeds they have furnished to record: whilst hanging in tranquil meditation over the past, if the presiding deity of the waters could have arisen to reveal its fame, how should we not have learnt of battles lost and won, of murderous desolation, by the hand of cruel victors or a tyrant king, of the floods of human gore its streams have borne to the distant bosom of the sea, of levelled towers and ruined walls, worked by the annihilating sword of Vandal, Goth, and Moor.

The ancient town was founded by a colony of Trojans, after the destruction of Troy, who, under the guidance of Egesta and Elymus, landed near Drepanum, and were hospitably received by the native Sicanians. Æneas, driven by tempestuous storms, arrived shortly after with a host of fugitives from their consumed capital, of whom he left an immense number in association with the first band, recommending them, in the bonds of friendship, to build cities, and support the name and valour of their Trojan ancestry. They chose a site between two rivers, which, in memory of their native streams, they called the Scamander and Simoes, and built two cities, called after their leaders,

Egesta and Elymus. At the former were placed the sick and infirm, on account of its salubrious situation and medicinal sulphuric springs*, which still exist, to identify the position, and corroborate the authority of historic record; they are the *Segestanæ aquæ* of the ancient Romans, mentioned in the itinerary of Antonine, in his route from the Lilybæan promontory to Tyndaris. At the latter, which stood at the end of the river, were placed the young and healthy under Elymus, who, being of royal birth, gave the name of Elymians to the inhabitants of both towns and their surrounding territories. However, his premature death suspended the progressive rise of his city, and in a very short space of time it disappeared, and was forgotten, whilst Egesta rapidly increased in magnitude, power, and riches, and in a few years shone forth in the splendor of an independent republic: its port was established where Elymus stood, called, according to Ptolemy, Segestanarum Emporium, and is mentioned by Thucydides as a maritime town.

It became the rival neighbour of the Selinuntines, who, jealous of its rising eminence, appropriated by force of arms a considerable proportion of their territory; the result of which proved a malignant contest between the two states, and the ultimate defeat of the Egestans on the banks of the Simois. It was on this occasion Egesta (being first refused by Syracuse and Agrigentum, who espoused the cause of Selinus), applied for the succour and interference of the Athenians, alluring them by artful reasonings, false promises, and a deceptive display of wealth, to establish an

* Not far from the temple there are several mineral springs, containing a considerable proportion of sulphur, one of which, about a mile from the site of the town, is hot, and a more powerful sulphuric, renowned for its efficacy in the cure of various diseases, particularly amongst the Moors, who called it Jammet (the baths), which name, with a slight corruption, it still retains, viz. Calameto.

alliance against the common enemy, and furnish a suitable force for the undertaking. In consequence of which that celebrated armament, B. C. 415, under Nicias, Alcibiades, and Lymachus, commenced one of the most memorable wars in Sicilian history. In the year 412 B. C., Egesta, dreading the exasperation and revenge of Syracuse, again sued for foreign aid, and placed themselves under the protection of the Carthaginians, who transported armies, and brought desolation into the island; and afterwards losing every claim to independence, it fell a prey to the conquest of successive powers, alternately betraying and betrayed; frequently levelled with the earth, and as often rose from its ruins under the temporary prosperity of some ambitious tyrant. But a direr and more cruel fate awaited the unfortunate Egesta in the year before Christ 319, when the remorseless and blood-thirsty Agathocles lead thither an army, under the pretence of quelling riot and rebellion in the city, but in reality to extort from its opulent inhabitants the immense sums of money his exigencies required; the blood of nearly two-thirds of the population purpled the streams of the Scamander, whilst others suffered the excruciating torments of the astragal and the brazen bed. The work of extermination accomplished, he gave up the city to a band of fugitive and exiled foreigners, thenceforward calling it Diecapolis.

In the first Punic war, the Carthaginians, mortified by a treaty of amity entered into by the Romans and Segestans, brought a besieging army under their walls, with threats of desperate revenge, from which, however, they were for once relieved by the brave Duillius, after his glorious naval victory off Mylæ, 295 B. C.; and when Sicily became a province of the Romans, they colonized and called it Segesta, because its original name implied a place of low extraction.

Under the yoke of Rome it enjoyed comparative tranquillity, and a suspension from the constant fluctuations of warfare. Though under the plundering dominion of Verres* it suffered the public robbery of its treasures and with impunity witnessed the carrying off of its most beautiful specimens of art, particularly the famous statue of Diana†, held in such reverence by the Egestans, and which, after being taken by the Carthaginians, was restored in triumph by the victorious Scipio, when Carthage fell a prey to his military prowess.

This once flourishing and powerful city of the Trojans again experienced a succession of misfortunes under the different hosts of barbarians that infested Europe on the decline of the Roman empire, and was finally swept from the earth by the Saracens in the beginning of the ninth century, with the exception of its magnificent temple, which, amongst all the interesting objects of Sicilian antiquity, is one of the most conspicuous and attractive. Like a monument of the tomb, it remains to claim the remembrance of once brighter days, to tell the passing traveller of ancient greatness and of fame; and, like a moral lesson, warns mankind of the transitory state of human things as of human life.

We concluded our visit to this interesting place by enjoying a morning meal on the steps of the venerable fane, whose massive columns furnished shade whilst indulging in the luxury of refreshment and repose. After which, re-

* Cicero ad Ver.

† This statue was of bronze, and supposed to be one of the finest productions of the art in Sicily, described by Cicero as of inimitable execution, holding in the right hand a torch, in the left a bow, with a quiver of arrows suspended from the right shoulder. Until plundered by Verres (who had it conveyed to Rome), it stood on a handsome pedestal in some public square, with a tablet, to record the liberality of the victor who restored it.

turning by the same path, we joined the high road, and proceeded towards Alcamo through a hilly country, which produces an abundance of the myrtle-leaved sumach* (Rhus coriaria) and manna ash (Fruxinus rotundifolia), the former of which is exported in large quantities for England, whilst the latter furnishes manna†, by tapping in the months of July and August, an article of great consumption amongst the Sicilians. The distance from the place where we rejoined the carriage-road to Alcamo is about twenty miles; we passed the little town of Borghetto to the right, and Valguinera to the left, the former beautifully situated in the mountains on the road to Partenico‡, with a royal palace and gardens, which command a fine prospect and delightful air. In the corner of the garden there is a curious old Saracenic tower, whose antique form, dilapidated walls, and singular position, constitute an interesting and picturesque object in the front ground of the scene. On a nearer approach to Alcamo, the country exhibited a more hospitable aspect, with the varied appearance of a more luxuriant and cultivated land; the mountain sides are clothed with the graceful foliage of the vine, and herds of cattle browsing along the plains, add to the rural delights of an English eye.

Before entering the town, we halted to behold the enchanting view that lay before us, including a rich undu-

* The leaves of this shrub are picked, dried, pounded, and put in bags for exportation, being much used in Europe, as in the most ancient times amongst the Greeks, for the purposes of tanning. The shrub gives richness to the appearance of a country, being bushy, and spreading with berries like those of the elder.

† After the juice of the ash is drawn from the tree it is exposed to the sun, where it undergoes fermentation, indurates, and forms a sort of paste, which is the manna so much esteemed in Sicily.

‡ The Parthenicum mentioned by Antoninus Pius, which is near the mouth of a small river towards the sea.

lated country down to the shores of Castell'a Marè bay, on whose silvery bosom a thousand little barks seemed gliding to and fro with their white sails shining in the sun; here and there a solitary old castle may be seen, or the falling ruins of a Moorish fortress, to tell of wars and other days when barbarous hordes laid waste the land.

Alcamo is a singular looking old town of 12,000 inhabitants, situated on the brow of a hill towards the sea, called Monte Bonefato, and enclosed by one of those thick heavy walls characteristic of the middle ages, with a very picturesque ancient castle, remarkable for its two round and two square towers. One comparatively good broad street intersects the town, where, however, there is little to gratify either the traveller's comfort or curiosity, excepting in the cathedral, a narrow shapeless building, where may be seen fine specimens of Sicilian marble, in the sixteen columns which support the nave; they are single blocks, of a yellowish red colour, produced in great quantities in various parts of the island.

The town derives its name from Alcamac, a Saracenic chief, who, with an army of forty thousand men, disembarked near Mazzara, in the year of our Lord, 828, and after destroying Selinus, advanced towards Monte Bonefato, on whose summit he established a fortress, to serve in case of emergency as a place of retreat. After him it was called Alcamo, and in process of time became a considerable Moorish town, which, after the expulsion of the infidel host, continued increasing under the christians until the reign of Frederick II. of Sicily, who built the present town in the year 1332, offering (as an inducement for the inhabitants of the old town to resort thither) amongst other privileges, exemption from military service; a means in those turbulent times that did not fail to procure a speedy

translation of its population from the old to the new city, which was styled Alcamo Nuovo. Outside the gates there is a monastery and church, the latter of which was the cathedral of Santa Maria della Stella, belonging to the ancient town in the time of the christians. A few traces of the old fortress still exist on the top of the hill, from whence also may be seen an extensive prospect of the surrounding country.

Unused to our new mode of travelling and the tedium of so many hours confinement to the rude exercise of our mules, we retired with feelings of enjoyment to the accommodations of even a dirty inn, for hunger and fatigue make common repose sweet, and coarse refreshment a luxury, and the most fastidious mind, under their influence, soon becomes reconciled to the privation of delicacy and refinement.

November 21.—From Alcamo the carriage road ceases, but is, however, substituted by a pretty good mule path to Trapani, twenty-one miles. The scenery this day by no means presented objects for the excitement of sentiments in praise of the sublime and beautiful; the country wore a bare, rocky, deserted aspect, unadorned by the more noble arborescent productions of the vegetable world, and unenlivened by the animating prospect of human habitations: like wandering pilgrims in a foreign land we wound through the solitary tracks, beguiling the hours, as we slowly paced along, by the agreeable interchange of thoughts on other scenes, sometimes listening to the traditionary tales or humorous anecdotes of our amusing guide; however, such is the interesting nature of a Sicilian tour, so fraught is it with the richest sources of contemplative interest to the classical reader, that I conceive it difficult for the mind of the well-informed traveller to dwindle, for a moment, into

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY — LIBRARY — OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH

Pastore della Montagne tra Palermo e Trapani

that vague reverie which the want of excitement is frequently apt to engender; if the absence of landscape beauty for a time weakens those pleasures derivable through the faculties of vision, the thoughts are directed to historic associations, and active meditation is kept up by a comparative view of the present with the memory of the past.

We traversed the villages of Baido and Magaria, between which, within a sequestered glen, the pellucid streams of a rivulet murmuring at the base of a bold projecting rock, attracted our notice as well as admiration; a few shrubs and wild flowers, with their dew drops glittering in the sun, embellished the rustic scene, which, from the contrast it bore to the inhospitable regions we had so lately past, excited feelings of enthusiasm that induced us to fix on the spot as our halting place; we consequently alighted, unbridled the animals, and partook of a breakfast from the provision basket with infinitely more satisfaction than if it had been administered at the board of one of the most luxurious caffès of the Palais Royal.

Nothing announced the approach to the precincts of a populous town until we came within a mile and a half of Trapani, and there but a few wretched hovels (inferior to the negro habitations I have seen amongst some of the wildest hordes of western Africa) lay scattered here and there to betoken the miserable condition of the beings who tenant them; however, a straggling party of portly looking Carmelite friars indicated the vicinity of better quarters and good fare, and we as quickly discerned, about a quarter of a mile before us, their monastery and church: the latter became so celebrated for the shrine of the Madonna di Trapani that, like the Casa Santa of Loretto, an annual

pilgrimage* is made to its altars. Encouraged by the courteous invitation of the monks we crossed over and visited the establishment. The object of idolatry consists in a moderately well executed statue of the virgin and child in fine Grecian marble, which this pious fraternity of Elisha's descendants have contrived to obtain. It is empaled within the church at an appropriate shrine, which, as well as the convent, has been enriched by the grateful devotions of tributary bigots from the town; the cunning friars have, by the artful policy of their holy calling, succeeded in attaching to it such sanctity and importance that it is now held in the greatest veneration by the Trepanese, who frequently come in crowds (particularly on the festival of the Assumption) to offer up their adorations before the image; the face is barbarously bedaubed with paint, to give it the colouring of life, whilst the few pretensions the chisel had to merit, seem totally obscured by the taudry ornaments that surround it; indeed, such is the bad taste in the whole style of decoration that I cannot help thinking it has been expressly effected by the sly old monks to prevent the thoughts of its idolators being diverted from the worship of the saviour and virgin to the admiration of the artist's skill.

A good road communicates with the town, to the right of which is a long line of aquaduct that supplies Trapani with pure water from the springs of Monte Juliano.

We reached the muleteer's quarters at an early hour, but, finding them still inferior to those of Alcamo, after

* The pilgrims, I learnt, do not come from very distant countries, and are more attracted by the hospitality of the convent than the holiness of its church: and is not the urbanity and liberal treatment of the monks rather a bribe for these professed penitents to keep up the farce?

depositing the baggage under the safeguard of the host, we gladly sallied forth to avail ourselves of the remaining day in visiting the local attractions, and breathing the pure air.

Trapani is a moderately neat, well-built town, situated on the land end of a long low isthmus, running out from Monte Juliano; it was strongly fortified, in its present style, with wall, bastions, and rampart, in the time of Charles V., who thus secured the advantages offered in a good post and strong military position; it encloses an old castle in the north-east corner, appropriated to the residence of the governor of the fortress, and other public purposes. At the western gate we again descended into the subterranean conservatories of departed friars belonging to a Capuchin convent; they are, however, less gloomy than those we had hitherto seen, being enclosed by an open iron grating, through which we were content to take a momentary glance at such an appalling scene of *memento mori*. The convent is well endowed, and, if I might be allowed to judge from the robust appearance of its brethren, the abode of ease, health, and riches; its halls are adorned with the works of Sicilian painters, some by no means devoid of merit, particularly those of a Trapanese artist named Carrera.

From the convent a delightful public walk has been formed along the isthmus, called the Carolina, and is terminated, at the western extremity, by the Torre Sigia, which contains a telegraph station, a lighthouse, and battery, that give protection to the harbour's entrance, at the same time denying access to an enemy, or facilitating that of a friend.

It was Sunday; assembled crowds, of all classes, in their gay characteristic holiday costume lent an interesting ani-

mation to the mal, and the long dark robes of the Trapanese belles floated gracefully in the breeze as they lightly tripped along; for invigorating gales blew from the west, and hurled the waves, with musical roar, against the rocks, and the Iris played beautifully through the spray as it rose from the foam of Mal Consiglio*. We turned, however, to expatiate on the classical scene that lay before us; one bold sweep commanded a view of Mount Erix, the Ægades, the πελαγος μεσος of the Greeks, and the fatal Lilybæan coast, with their surrounding seas, the great theatre of ancient war, and of conflicts as memorable for their consequences as for the valour of the mighty hosts that fought; at one time a scene of sanguinary desolation, at another of peaceful prosperity; and though all now was solitude and silence on the waters, save the impetuous tide that rushed before the gale, how often have they not witnessed the destruction of armies and the annihilation of fleets, its waves alternately purpled with the streams of Punic, Roman, or of Grecian gore! It was here Lutatius triumphed over Hanno's scornful power, where exulting Carthage lost her naval fame, and Rome first gained dominion of the sea. As we gazed and stood in silent contemplation of the past, all the affecting detail of that once glorious period rushed upon the mind which has been handed down to us by the masterly pens of Polybius, Diodorus, Livy, and others, and we reverted, not with the least feelings of interest, to that scene over which an everlasting lustre has been shed by the im-

* Mal Consiglio is a rock at the end of the isthmus under Sigia tower, so named because tradition reports it to be the place on which John of Procida took his friends to advise with, and communicate the day and hour appointed for the celebrated massacre of the Sicilian vespers, in which the Trapanese took an active part, and afterwards called the rock Buon Consiglio, which it retained until the last century, when the philanthropy of the age changed it from Buon to Mal Consiglio.

mortalizing strains of the Mantuan bard, beholding, in imagination, the weary fleet of Æneas and his aged sire take refuge from the raging storm in the port that lay before us.

The Ægades consist of three islands, situated about twelve miles west of Trapani, anciently called Egusa, Hiera, and Phorbantia, now better known by their modern names of Favognano, Maretimo, and Levanzo. The first of which, namely Favignano, is the southernmost and most important in point of productions, population, and extent: it is defended by three forts, the Castle of Santa Catharina being the strongest, which stands on an eminence at the east side over the town of San Leonardo;* in one of the others, called San Giacomo, are immured the exiled criminals from Sicily, who are doomed to waste away the remainder of their lives in its dreary abodes. The island is well watered, and produces an abundance of excellent vegetables and delicious fruits, as well as sheep, goats, and poultry; it is celebrated for its fisheries of the tunny† and anchovy, and abounds

* San Leonardo is populous for its size, containing nearly three thousand inhabitants, and has two or three churches, with a convent and catacombs, called the Purgatorio.

† The tunny is the *scomber thynnus* of Ichthyology, of a dark steel blue on the back, with a silvery white abdomen: it is migratory, and very peculiar to the Mediterranean, which it enters in prodigious shoals about the month of June, and remains until October and November, particularly round the shores of Sicily, where it is taken in great abundance, as formerly by the Greeks and Romans who highly esteemed it. It is from two to eight feet long, according to the age: the smaller ones of which are eaten fresh, and the others cut up and salted. The flesh is extremely coarse, and, I think, of very disagreeable flavour; however, such is the fondness for it here that it not only supports thousands but yields an immense revenue to the crown.

The tunny is taken by immense powerful nets, so distributed as to form four compartments, with communicating passages, extending from twelve two fourteen hundred feet in length. Boatmen are on the look out, and

in various species of game, particularly of woodcocks, snipes, hares, and rabbits, which I was astonished to hear from a proprietor who courteously pressed us to go over for a few days' shooting. There is an admirable roadsted between this island and Levanso, highly calculated for the shelter and anchorage of the largest fleets; but, indeed, it has been frequented by numerous squadrons of modern as of ancient times: Hannibal put in here with a large fleet and armaments of ten thousand men, for the relief of Lilybæum, in the year 249 B. C.; afterwards, it was a favourite station of the Romans, and peculiarly celebrated for the resort of the formidable armament under the Consul Lutatius (in the year B. C. 241), who, to mar the design of Hanno*, sailed thither with his whole fleet† from Drepanum, and, on the following morning, gained that memorable victory, over his insolent adversary, which first awakened Carthage from the illusion that resistance to

as they discover the fish entering the first division, they close the entrance by which the captive seeking escape gains the second compartment, and so on until he arrives at the last, which is called the cammera della morte, or chamber of death, being the place where he is finally taken and destroyed.

* Hanno, with a prodigious fleet of war-galleys, and transports of provisions, sailed from Carthage with the intention of relieving Hamilcar on Mount Erix, and of destroying the Roman fleet after he had lightened his vessels and selected Hamilcar's choicest troops; but stress of weather obliged him to put into Hiera, which occasioned the subsequent destruction of his own expedition, turned the tide of war in favour of Rome, and changed the fate of Carthage.

† This was the fleet equipped entirely at the private expense of Roman citizens, whose patriotic zeal on that occasion may justly be held up as an example worthy of imitation to other nations labouring under similar emergencies: the public treasure being exhausted, and the service of a navy becoming so indispensible, wealthy individuals built vessels at their own cost after that light model which had been taken from the Rhodian; and, in a short space of time, placed an enormous fleet of 200 quinqueremes at the disposal of the senate.

their maritime dominion was vain, established the naval prowess of Rome, and put an end to the first Punic war.

The sagacious Lutatius, descrying the enemy rapidly proceeding from Hiera towards Eryx, with the eye of an experienced warrior marked the moment for Hanno's ruin and his own glory, and, whilst they were yet encumbered with troops and provisions, hastened to the encounter of the enemy, who, at the first onset, he put to confusion, and completely defeated: fifty of their galleys were sunk and seventy taken, whilst the rest escaped to Hiera, favoured by a sudden change of wind.

Maretimo lies to the westward of the two others, the ancient Hiera. It is a high, steep, rocky island, with a few farm houses on the east side, composing the hamlet of San Simone, which is defended by a castle; the land is particularly fertile in grain, and is covered with wild thyme, consequently celebrated for the production of a large quantity of honey, which is taken to Marsala and Trapani for sale. It was here the miserable wreck of Hanno's fleet retreated after their disgrace, and it has served, in succeeding ages, as a lurking place for pirates of all nations, until the last century, when it was put into a state of defence to check their predatory excursions.

Levanso, the ancient island of Phorbantia*, lies to the north of Favagnana; it contains few inhabitants, although the fertility of the soil is such, between the rocks and hills, that any thing may be cultivated with the greatest facility, and excellent fruits are produced, indigenously, in as great luxuriance as when aided, in more northern regions, by the advantages of horticultural science. Fish abounds round its coast, as the other islands, and constitutes a great

* Called Phorbantia by the Greeks, on account of its hilly resemblance to Phorbantium in Thessaly.

article of trade in this part of the world, from whence both the government and individuals derive a considerable revenue.

How great are the chances and changes of this our sublunary state! what a field for philosophical reflection have we not before us even in these three insignificant islands, which now may be said at best to enjoy but a semi-barbarous existence; yet, as the Ægades, they hold a most ostensible place in the history of olden times, were particularly prominent features in the latter part of the first Punic war, and are kept in memory by the records of Strabo, Ptolemy, and Pliny.

The period when Trapani first rose to any degree of importance in the page of history remains hitherto involved in mystery; for, although situated in the country of the Sicanians, who were an industrious enterprising people, no town of consequence can be traced to their times: and the Trojan refugees, who arrived here under Æneas, Elymus, and Egestus, built their cities in the vicinity of Mount Erix, and the country that lies to the westward. However, it seems, by general authority, to derive its appellation from the early Greek settlers, who were attracted thither by the commodiousness of its port, and called it Drepanon*, from its assimilated form to the scythe, to which they afterwards attached the mythological tale of Saturn, who, they assert, after the bloody deed he committed on his father Cœlus, threw the sanguinary instrument into these waters, which imparted its form to the adjacent shore.

Little mention is made of it in the wars between the Carthaginians and the Sicilian towns, but it became a great bone of contention in the first punic war, when Ha-

* ΔΡΕΠΑΝΟΝ, a scythe.

milcar, after a vigorous siege, took possession of and retained it until the close of the contest. The government of it was given to Adherbal, who, conscious of its local advantages to the Carthaginians, and the strength of its position, defended it with obstinate intrepidity against the incessant attempts of the Romans to dislodge them from their hold, and most particularly in that dreadful siege with which Lutatius opened the campaign after his appointment to the consulship. Notwithstanding the consul had effected a breach in the wall, and, at the head of a chosen party of valiant soldiers, was mounting to the assault, he was opposed with equal valour by the assailed, and severely wounded, which obliged him to discontinue the enterprize, and direct his thoughts to the more important exploit of checking the progress of Hanno's fleet, which he learned was at sea. However, the treaty of Lutatius and Hamilcar, that put an end to the war, submitted it with the whole of Sicily to the power of the Romans, who thenceforward called it Drepanum.

In the servile wars, and during the incursions of the various barbarous hordes of the middle ages, it experienced the same disasters, change of fortune, and dominion, in common with the other towns, and did not attain any degree of consequence or prosperity until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when its commercial pursuits increasing, Charles the Fifth fortified the town, and established a military depot as a protection against the depredations of pirates that in those days infested the seas.

It is now become a place of great consideration in the island, various branches of traffic are actively pursued, and it contains a population of twenty-five thousand souls, whose industry has acquired a great proportion of individual affluence, when compared with the present state of

Sicilian politics. It has several well conducted institutions for charitable purposes and education, and the public edifices are, generally speaking, respectable, though they contain nothing within sufficiently attractive to merit the stranger's notice. There are thirty-five churches, besides a variety of monastic establishments; of the former the cathedral and San Lorenzo are the finest, while the Franciscan convent boasts the superiority of the latter; it is celebrated for the possession of a beautiful golden chalice, and a fine specimen of coral, sculptured into a figure of our Saviour, twelve inches long, which commands alike the admiration of religious enthusiasts and the amateurs of art.

The coral trade is carried on to a great extent in Trapani, not only arising from the fisheries of its own coast, but those of Tunis, for the privilege of which they pay a trifling annual rent to the Bey*. However, the competition they are about to experience from England I imagine will soon deprive them of these benefits, and at the same time of the means of livelihood to hundreds of poor wretches, who have been their whole lives engaged in this pursuit.

Many artists are employed in the sculpture of alabaster, wood, and Sicilian shells; in the two latter they are the most skilful, though the Cameos will admit of no comparison with the beautifully executed ones of Rome. The sculptors of wood have long enjoyed the fame of superiority in this place, and have produced many wonderful specimens of the peculiar art, particularly that in the oratorio of San Michele, representing the subject of our Saviour's passion; but their alabasters are very inferior, and lose all claim to admiration when brought in contact with those of Florence.

* I met at Trapani an English gentleman on his way to Tunis, for the purpose of contracting with the Bey for a lease of the fisheries, which, from the formidable means they intended employing to obtain the coral, I conceive will be exhausted in a very few years.

The port of Trapani, though formerly infinitely better than at present, still affords accommodation for vessels of two hundred and sixty tons, besides abundant shelter for all sorts of small craft. By long neglect it has been considerably clogged, and contracted with accretions of mud and sand from the sea, which, however, by the aid of a little public spirit, may easily be removed whenever the advantages of commercial prosperity render it worth the inhabitants while: but let us look at the illiberal policy of their commercial code, and acknowledge the present impossibility: let us reflect on the dominion to which they are subject, and excuse their sloth. Vessels discharge alongside a good mole that runs out from the end of the Marina, a fashionable promenade between the town wall and the sea, where indifferently executed statutes of Philip V. and Victor Amadeus, keep alive the memory of Spanish and Sardinian yoke.

The wind abated in the evening, and we took a boat from the harbour to the rocky islets that lie to the south; we were now floating in that port whose waters are for ever endeared to the memory of the classic reader, by the shelter they gave to Æneas and his wandering fleet: it was here from wrecks and storms his shattered barks found refuge and repose, and here his much loved parent landed never to return.

> Hinc Drepani me portus, et illætabilis ora
> Accipit. Hic pelagi tot tempestatibus actus,
> Heu genitorem, omnis curæ casusque levamen
> Amitto Anchisen.—*Third Æneid.*

A little farther and we lay on our oars, on the spot where Claudius Pulcher paid the severe penalty of his imprudent temerity; for it was there, issuing from behind his concealment, the brave and vigilant Adherbal surprized

the Roman consul, who, thunderstruck at the unexpected appearance of such a formidable fleet, tacked and endeavoured to retreat; but it was too late, the fleets were already in contact, and the conflict began, which, though at first equally and valorously contested, soon decided in favour of the Carthaginians, who being to seaward of the Romans, necessarily had many advantages, and ultimately succeeded in driving on shore or capturing ninety-three of the enemy's vessels, the remainder of the fleet to the amount of thirty having escaped with Claudius, who stood away for Lilybæum*.

The approach of night awoke us from our leisurely contemplations, and we skimmed rapidly through the tide, for the sea was now calm, and our boatmen with their clumsy oars, gave a lusty stroke to the time of an evening song, which we excited by the never failing rhetoric of the purse. The Columbara, the principal of the group, is a longitudinal rocky islet, inhabited by a few fishermen, with a light house and battery on the top, abreast of which vessels of large tonnage anchor that cannot enter Trapani; it is rendered interesting to the ear by the retention of its ancient name, being the πελειας νησος† (or island of doves) of the

* 248 B. C. The Romans, discouraged by their successive misfortunes at sea, most particularly the simultaneous loss of this fleet, and the one of one hundred and twenty sail by wreck off Cape Pachynus, under Junius Pullus, resolved on renouncing again the empire of the seas and the further equipment of the navy. However, the experience of five years fruitless warfare convinced the senate of the impossibility of achieving the conquest of Sicily without the aid of a naval force, and they once more raised an armament, not only of more skilfully built vessels, but more numerous than any of the former, the result of which is already detailed in the glorious victory of Lutatius, who had the command.

† Captain Smith describes this island as the goal established by Æneas for the boat race, which, I think, a steady perusal of the fifth book of the

Greeks, who gave it the appellation from the number of doves that used to settle there during the periods of migration. In the first Punic war it became a strong post of the Romans, particularly during the sieges and blockade of Drepanum and Lilybæum, when the Consul Fabius Butes connected it with the main land by a mole, forthe purpose, I imagine, of cutting off communication along shore between the two ports: relics of the work remain to attest the place and fact.

To the westward of Colombara are two rocky islets, called from their size and form the Formiche or Ants; the largest is inhabited, and entirely devoted to the use of the tunny fishery, with extensive storehouses for the salting and packing of the fish for exportation. The whole is defended by a good tower.

Monday, 22d November.—Having proposed to go no farther this day than Marsala, we rose at five and made an excursion to Monte Giuliano, the celebrated Eryx of antiquity, which lies about a mile and a half E. N. E. of Trapani. It is a bare sterile mountain, whose summit stands nearly two thousand two hundred feet from the level of the sea; into which it gradually shelves on the west side, declining on the east into a rich luxuriant plain, abounding in fruits, grain, the olive, and the vine; the adjoining shores are covered with a great variety of the salsala, from which, by incineration, the barilla of commerce is extracted, and forms a great article of exportation.

Æneid will undeniably confute, and clearly prove the rock now called Mal Consiglio, to be the one alluded to by the Mantuan bard in the following beautiful passage.

> " Hic viridem Æneas frondenti et illice metam
> Constituit, signum nautis, pater: unde reverti
> Scirent, et longas ubi circumflectere cursus."

The grape of this country produces a most luscious wine, and if properly cultivated and attended to would equal the finest; but the plant is neglected and allowed to spread its prolific branches almost spontaneously along the earth, to gratify the mistaken calculations of the proprietors' avarice, quantity being more studiously cultivated than quality.

A mule path leads from the plain, through a variety of rugged windings, to the mountain's top, once rendered so easy of access by the famous road of Dædalus, parts of which are still to be seen and are pointed out under the denomination of a Cyclopean wall.

The mountain derives its title from Eryx, the son of Butes, who being exiled from his native country Bebryces, sought refuge in this part of the island and married a native damsel named Lycaste, who, from her extreme beauty, received the appellation of Venus. Eryx, the only fruits of this connection, inherited, at the death of his father Butes, considerable riches, and became a powerful prince: he founded a town on the west side somewhere near the present site of the convent of St. Anna, which, after himself, he called Eryx, and erected a temple of great riches and magnificence on the summit, for the performance of the sacred rites of paganism peculiar to the age, but which (being dedicated to his beautiful mother) was in the course of time styled the temple of Venus. He established athletic exercises on the plain, in which, from his gigantic stature he himself excelled, and ultimately ventured to challenge the world against his dexterity with the cestus; upon which Hercules offered himself as a competitor, soon met the champion and slew him. Eryx was buried on the summit of the mountain, near the temple, and his country fell under the dominion

of Hercules and his successors; notwithstanding which the temple continued to be greatly reverenced, increased in riches and splendour, and at length became solely appropriated to the rites of the Paphian goddess. Dædalus the renowned Athenian, at the period of his flight from Cocalus, king of Crete, adorned its altars with the inimitably executed golden heifer (mentioned by Diodorus), and built the road alluded to above. In the wars between Carthage and the Sicilian Greeks, the Carthaginians became possessed of the town, which they made a powerful hold, and embellished the fane with sacred vases of costly materials, but were driven out, 278 B. C., by Pyrrhus*, after a dreadful and destructive siege. Wild doves frequented the plain on the mountain during the summer heats, hence it was said that Venus, under their form, had returned to visit the temple, and games were in consequence established to celebrate the presence of the goddess, which received, in after times, the appellation of Anagogia, from the Greek word expressing return.

The most beautiful women of all nations were procured, and appointed the priestesses and perpetual guardians of the sacred altars, and during the solemnization of the festival, which was attended by the inhabitants of all the surrounding towns and villages, the rules of female chastity and decorum were withdrawn, and every degree of sensuality and licentiousness became so tolerated and encouraged that the non-indulgence in its wanton freedoms was consi-

* Pyrrhus having married the daughter of Agathocles, interested himself in the fate of the Syracusan Greeks, and who, being besieged by the Carthaginians, implored his aid, upon which he transported an army into Sicily, and, with the most incredible rapidity, accomplished the conquest of all the towns they held, with the exception of Lilybæo, where he experienced considerable losses and was obliged to raise the siege and return to Africa.

dered supererogatory self-denial; indeed, such were the social abuses into which it degenerated that, of all the pagan rites of antiquity we are acquainted with, none exhibited so much sensuality as those of Eryx; the most degraded debauchees resorted to their celebration, whose example rapidly extended its baneful influence among a set of beings untaught or unrestrained by the genial laws of christianity. It is said to have been carried to its greatest excess in the time of the Romans, who subjected (according to Diodorus) fourteen towns to a heavy tribute for the support of the annual expenses and ornaments of the temple*. Consuls, prætors, magistrates, and commanders, bowed, in reverence, to the fane of Eryx: even the insatiate Verres, who profaned every other temple by robbery and contempt, to the accommodating and voluptuous shrine of this offered up his unholy vows, and enriched its altar with a beautifully executed cupid in silver.

The Romans first gained possession of the mountain in the year 248 B. C., under the Consul Junius, who, having lost his fleet by shipwreck, repaired thither, with the army, to retrieve his character by some signal enterprise in his country's service: he soon reached the city and temple, which, through treason and surprise, he made himself master of, and secured by building a fort at the lower entrance of the pass, as well as posting strong bodies of men near the temple: however, Amilcar Barcas, notwithstanding these precautions, two years after, found a way, lying towards the sea, by which he conveyed his men unnoticed into the city of Eryx, where he fortified himself, and bid defiance, both from above and below, to the attacks of the enemy,

* The beautiful statue of Venus which adorned the celebrated temple in Rome was brought from hence by Marcellus, in obedience to the dictates of the Cumæan sybil.

who in vain tried to dislodge this invincible leader from his post: for two years the mountain was a scene of the fiercest warfare, of vigorous attacks and mutual stratagems, during which both parties successively experienced all the afflicting concomitants of a disastrous siege. How long the city of Eryx existed after these wars seems unknown: Strabo says, in his time it was swept from the face of the earth and the temple entirely abandoned. On the summit, and over the foundation of its ruins, now stands the modern town of Eryx, or Monte Giuliano, but not a vestige remains to mark the site of the once celebrated fane, although *cicerones* and natives have baptized a few Norman relics with the title.

The town is a rude-looking dilapidated fortress, founded (as I have every reason to conjecture) about the decline of the Roman empire, when the disturbed state of the country forced people to seek their abode in the most secluded and inaccessible places; it is surrounded by an antiquated wall with turrets, and flanked, to the west, by a castle and tower, evidently of Norman production, but all in a lamentable state of decay, all ready to fall in prostrate acknowledgement of the superior power of time. Eight thousand souls tenant its dreary habitations, unknown for any moral virtues, undistinguished by any manual skill; and their only solitary boast seems to be that the town is the birth-place of the celebrated Alberto, a carmelite, who, in the last century, practised on this deluded people a variety of monkish tricks, under the denomination of miracles, wrought through the medium of divine aid.

The mountain air is refreshing, invigorating, and salubrious, the truth of which is strongly attested by the innumerable instances of longevity amongst the inhabitants; and our credulity of the fact was not a little operated upon by the

delightful experience we enjoyed of but a few hours; we breakfasted on the top of a dilapidated wall, near the border of a precipitous descent, commanding a splendid view of land and sea; and I cannot sufficiently describe the exhilarating effects I felt when inhaling the delicious breezes as they lightly skimmed over the mountain's top, or the ineffable delight such a panoramic display at once inspired me with: ten thousand interesting ideas crowded across my mind as I sat in silent admiration on the elevated pinnacle of the rock; the sunny waters of the Mediterranean lay shining to the west, studded with its rocks and isles; to the east a spangled plain, teeming with earth's riches, spread before us like another Eden's garden, both ennobled by their ancient fame—fields and sea consecrated alike by the glorious contests of the brave. Wheresoever we directed our observation the beauties and sublimities of nature awakened the tender feelings of love and reverence for a God, or the genius of history and poetry raised the soul to enthusiasm by the sentiments they inspired; so that the eye may repose, in religious admiration, on the splendid exhibitions of the one, or the mind become elevated by the fascinating and instructive recollections of the other.

We paused awhile in the rapturous enjoyment of this scene, then bent our course down the western side of the mountain, passing by Imico, near where we quaffed a pure draught from the waters of what is called the Emperor's fountain*, and reached the shore at Bonagia†, and took

* So called because the Emperor Charles V., on his return from Africa, visited this place and partook of the pure waters from its fountain.

† There is good anchorage and shelter here, consequently much frequented by small craft engaged in the tunny fishery which is extensively pursued on this coast. The country, though fertile in grain, does not boast much picturesque beauty, particularly as far as the river Foggio, and solely derives its interest from its classic fame.

boat; yet, ere embarking, we dwelt in ecstacy of thought on the classic scene that unfolded to our view; for the whole theatre of the fifth Æneid lay before us, and we now trod the land where old Anchises died—once honoured with his sepulchre. It was here, by boisterous billows driven, once more Æneas landed with the Trojan host, and, having found the grave, instituted funeral games to celebrate the memory of his father. We traced the geographical accuracy of the bard, and, in imagination, beheld the glorious contest for the victor's wreath; we saw the sea-green Scylla swiftly speed around the oak-bound rock, Euryalus in the foot-race reach the goal, and, with laurel crowned, Enthellus and Acestes, whose strongest arm and fleetest arrow won the prize: in fancy, too, we viewed the the crackling flames bursting from the sides of the Trojan fleet; for it was here the matrons, weary of their wandering fate, set fire to the ships of poor Æneas.

The traveller will find much pleasure in contemplating the scenes described by Virgil, from the fidelity with which they are almost invariably delineated; every spot may be identified and traced, with surprising facility, by some never-failing mark with which he characterises his localities.

We reluctantly resigned the contemplation of such captivating scenes, and, on arriving at Trapani, we found the steeds and guide awaiting our departure.

CHAPTER III.

From Trapani to Marsala it is eighteen miles, a pretty good mule road, along rather a dreary coast, which is defended, towards the beach, by towers at short distances. On quitting the town we passed through the famous salt works, where immense quantities of that article are made, by evaporation, from sea water, which is let into a succession of large basins for the purpose; after the process it is scraped together into pyramidal heaps, which lie strewed about the ground for sale, and have the appearance, at a distance, of a Liliputian encampment; it is a lucrative article of exportation at Trapani, and the trade seems actively pursued there. We skirted the territory of Paceco to our left (or rather Paccio, as it is usually called) a small town of two thousand inhabitants; and a little beyond crossed the streamlet of Agabuzzo, so called from the town of that name near whence it takes its rise. Small as these rivulets appear, during the dry season, they nevertheless interpose formidable obstacles to the traveller's progress after a fall of rain. Almost all the rivers of Sicily are little better than mountain torrents (fiumare), whose rocky beds are generally dry in summer, and afford passages to different parts of the country, which are much frequented, as short cuts, by the muleteers of the island: some of the larger ones, whose channels are wider, and whose bold rocky sides are clothed with shrubs and the grateful tenants of the forest, exhibit, oftentimes, some of the most splendid specimens of picturesque scenery I ever witnessed in Sicily; and, when an-

mated by the grotesque groupes of a muleteer's convoy*, present a picture that would challenge the powers of the most skilful artist: but in winter, when the country is deluged by the heavy falls of rain peculiar to that season, the rivers became impassable and travelling dangerous, there being no bridges, and frequently neither shelter or place of repose at hand. The rains generally continue from November to the end of February, after which latter month, I think, it must be advisable to commence the tour of the island in preference to any other period of the year, for many reasons, and principally because, at that time, nature begins to bud forth all her beauties, the country is clothed with the most exquisite variety of verdant hues, the most beautiful flowrets adorn the land, and vegetation is occasionally refreshed by mild showers, which render it probably the more desirable season for the traveller than the fall of the year, previous to the setting in of the rains, when the mid-day heats are powerful, and the country parched up; many, however, prefer the months of September and October, on account of the autumnal tints which indubitably offer powerful attractions to the amateur of landscape beauty.

About half way between Trapani and Marsala the road crosses the river Brigi, with Cape Theodoro and tower to the right: from hence the country begins to assume a more interesting character, and encreases in beauty as you approach the city, for although but thinly interspersed with human habitations, it is enriched by the fruitful productions of horticultural labour; the land rises gradually towards the interior, whose gentle undulations are adorned with plantations of the olive and the vine. It is called

* In Sicily merchandise is carried inland on the backs of mules, and they generally go in convoys of from ten to twenty in a drove, sometimes uniting from a feeling of fellowship, sometimes for mutual security.

the Terra Spagnuola*, from a town of that name which we passed to the left: beyond it also we skirted the little town of Mercanta, and arrived rather late at Marsala.

From Cape Theodoro to Cape Boeo the coast trenches inland, forming a sort of bay, which encloses five rocky islands called the Stagnone†, namely, Burrone, Favilla, Cerdinisi, San Pantaleo, and Scuolètto, which latter is, as it expresses, a mere rock; the rest are all inhabited and produce a considerable quantity of salt, particularly at Burrone, which is the most esteemed.

San Pantaleo is an object of peculiar interest, and is endeared to the traveller from its being the ancient and celebrated Motya. It is nearly a mile and three-quarters in circumference, and was originally inhabited by some Greek settlers from Cnidos, but, from its very elegible situation, it was soon forced from them by the Phœnicians, who selected it as one the three holds they established for their commercial protection when the Greeks began to interfere with their pursuits in Sicily; they fortified and enriched it with the fruits of industry and traffic, and when Carthage became the independent capital of these colonies, its fortress was strengthened and became the principal place d'armes of the Carthaginians; for, sublimer views than the simple acquisition of commercial riches had already begun to animate their ambitious citizens, and they looked forward, with secret feelings of delight, to the conquest of the

* In 1517 an army of Spaniards were encamped around here, having been sent to suppress a serious tumult that had arisen at the death of Ferdinand of Spain; their stay was long, and from the scarcity and devastation they created around the country, ever afterwards retained the name of Terra Spagnuola.

† Strictly speaking the appellation of Stagnone belongs only to that space included between Capes Boeo and Theodoro, originally applied on account of the tranquillity of its waters and the resemblance to a lake which the word expresses; but time and corruption have indiscriminately applied the term to the islands as well as the waters that surround them.

fruitful shores of Sicily through the aid of this little post, which, by its situation and contiguity to their coast, admitted of easy communication, and furnished a place of security for the transport of their troops, from whence they could at any suitable opportunity make a formidable attack on the Greek towns*. Indeed, such was the annoyance it ultimately proved to the Greeks, that the elder Dionysius resolved to destroy it, and in consequence opened his celebrated campaign against Carthage, 397 B. C., by the siege of Motya; until this time it was connected with the main by a narrow neck of land, which the Carthaginians cut away for the better defence of the place. Dionysius, however, soon restored it again for the purpose of approaching his formidable war engines, particularly the newly invented six storied towers† and destructive catapult: the siege was conducted with the most desperate fury, and as vigorously resisted by the besieged, who, notwithstanding, were reduced to the humiliating necessity of yielding to the prevailing arms of the Grecian tyrant, who succeeded, by dint of his tremendous engines, in battering gaping breaches in the wall, through whence, like the irresistible tide of an impetuous torrent, he poured his blood-thirsty troops; but still they met appalling opposition from their desperate adversaries, who yielded not an inch of ground but at the price of blood; they combated with maniac fury, were driven from street to street, from house to house, until overwhelmed by the Grecian host, who, for their obstinacy, put every soul to the sword, excepting those who fled, for young men, women, and children, all were inhumanly

* Thucydides and Cluverius, the latter of whom, as usual, proves it by a thousand quotations.

† These towers were of wood six stories high, and, being mounted on wheels, were capable of being brought close to the walls of a besieged town so as to place the archers of the assailants on a level with those of the assailed.

slaughtered, and the town was given up to pillage. It again fell into the hands of the Carthaginians the following year, who made it a complete island, but was subsequently ruined by the Greeks in those exterminating contests that preceded the Punic wars. The Romans fortified it again during their long siege of Drepanum and Lilybæum, and for protection to the sacred altars of the temples; old and some of the Sicilian writers affirm, that the town was standing as late as the early ages of the christians; but all now lies levelled with the earth, perhaps by the desolating sword of the infidels, who took possession of it for the purpose of establishing a fishery there, and gave it the appellation of Zezabug. A few fragments of walls still remain to identify the sepulchre of so much ancient greatness: they are not however of Phœnician but evidently of Roman work, which is strongly attested by the regularity of form in the stones, so contrary to the architectural style of the former. Many relics, nevertheless, of undeniable Punic productions have been discovered at various periods to set at rest Fazello's doubts concerning the identity of Motya's site.

From a theatre of destructive warfare, it is now become the tranquil scene of industrious husbandry, the sword is turned into the ploughshare, and the smiles of a beautiful nature annually remunerate the toils of the few inhabitants who cultivate the fertile soil; its fruits are abundant and boast peculiar superiority of flavour, particularly the figs, for which it is pre-eminently celebrated; the vine also is managed there with more than usual care, and yields in return an excellent species of wine, which, however, is difficult to obtain, for the island has again become the exclusive property of the jesuits, whose cryptic hordes monopolize all the generous liquor.

The land abounds every where with fragments of lamps, pateræ, building materials, and even valuable coins are

occasionally found by the labourers as they carelessly turn up the antiquated soil. A trifling expense and a little industry, in the way of excavation, I think would bring to light antiquities that might prove the invaluable records of historical fact, and at once supply sufficient evidence to shake even the antiquarian's scepticism concerning its Punic fame.

Our late arrival within the gates of Marsala, and the absence of Mr. Woodhouse, to whom we had several introductory letters, prevented us accomplishing better accommodations than our worthy guide's accustomed place of resort could afford; however, experience had already taught both of us an easy reconciliation with the fare of chance, and, as hospitality too frequently interferes with the pursuits of the tourist, we felt more independent in the command of our own store basket, although sheltered by a humbler tenement and seated on a couple of crazy stools over a starving braciere*.

The morning had scarcely dawned through the innumerable gaping crevices of doors and window-shutters, before we were equipped for a sortie, and, ere breakfast was prepared, we had traversed almost every street, and gained a general outline of the interior character of the town.

Marsala enjoys the advantages of a salubrious situation. It stands near the sea on a low promontory, the extremity of which is called Cape Boeo (the celebrated Lilybœum † of the antients). It contains nearly twenty-three thousand inhabitants, and is surrounded by a quadrangular wall, for-

* The braciere is a large pan, in the form of an ewer, containing burning charcoal, which the Sicilians place in the centre of a room to substitute the superior luxury of a fire-place; it has a most cheerless appearance, and yields little heat unless constantly kept alive by the use of fans made for the purpose.

† So called by the ancients, because it is opposite to the Lybian coast.

tified with bastions, and an old castle, all of which are at present in a very inefficient state for defence against external attack, though possessing every capacity for being rendered a formidable place of security. One good street, called the Cassaro, intersects the town, and the houses are, generally speaking, compactly built; yet, from their rough, unfinished style, and the want of cleanly habits, exhibit to an English eye but a miserable specimen of what he considers the comforts of a dwelling-house.

Convents and churches, as usual, swell up the list of public edifices, though none offer food for the curious, excepting, probably, the sixteen Corinthian columns of Sicilian marble in the cathedral, which are eagerly pointed out to the British traveller as having been originally intended for the church of St. Thomas of Canterbury. An officiating priest advanced as we viewed their polished shafts, and signified his friendly disposition towards us by an offering from his snuff-box. He was a man advanced in years; a dignified deportment accompanied his flattering urbanity of manner, and he gained at once our confidence and respect, which we had no reason to repent. The animated fire of a dark eye betokened deep penetration and intellectual activity, and the possession of a refined, well-informed mind was soon made known to us by his brilliant and enlightened conversation, during which, besides a history of the marbled columns we stood before, he furnished a variety of very valuable local information, giving us much cause of regret when the fleeting hours rendered it necessary to withdraw from the pleasure of his beguiling company.

The port, though so valued of old, though the haven and rendezvous of the numerous warring fleets of ancient days, is now incapable of giving shelter to any other vessels than small craft. It is shallow, has but a narrow passage to its bay, and is surrounded by rocks, which extend almost a

mile in every direction from the shore; hence the justness of the poet's memorable and expressive words *, "Saxis Lilybeia cœcis." From its natural defects, it never could have boasted the advantages of what (according to modern estimation) we term a good haven; nevertheless, I am inclined to think it has been considerably better than it now is. Surely the enormous quantity of massive stones sunk by the Romans must have tended to injure the capacities of the port; in addition to which, Don John † of Austria completed the ruinous work by the adoption of similar measures for the purpose of preventing ingress to the Barbary pirates, who were at that period frequently attracted thither by the conveniency of its haven.

A considerable trade is carried on here in wine and barilla, the former principally conducted by an English gentleman of the name of Woodhouse, who is not less remarkable for his kindness and attentions than for the extremely liberal hospitality he shows to any of his countrymen travelling in that part of the world. He has built a good stone wharf, and erected near it an extensive range of stores, from whence he exports the well-known Marsala wine to almost all parts of the world. Vessels of burden touching here are obliged to be at the anchorage about two miles outside.

Marsala boasts a place of peculiar interest in the annals of historic fame; it is the ancient Lilybæum (Λιλύβαιον), and received its appellation from the promontory on which it stands. It owes its origin to Hannibal, the son of Giscon, who in the year 410, B. C., landed with that immense army,

* Æneid.

† In the year 1570. Charles V. also before him did a great deal to destroy the port, so that it cannot be wondered at that its advantages as a haven have in some measure diminished in modern times.

and took up his post on its present site previous to the destruction of Selinus. Not a human habitation was then to be seen, and from a mere encampment, or fortified position, it rose in a few years to a considerable town (but the instance is not solitary, for many of the most celebrated cities of modern times have risen from the establishment of military posts), and from its favourable situation, good port, and proximity to Africa, the Carthaginians were induced to colonize and increase it; so that, in course of time, it became one of the most formidable fortresses of the day, and was constituted the capital of all their Sicilian provinces. Polybius says it was surrounded by massive walls and a deep ditch cut out of the solid rock, and filled with water from the sea; it bid defiance alike to the catapult and the battering-ram, and its strength proved impregnable to all the efforts of both Greeks and Romans, who in vain surrounded it with fleets and armies.

Carthage, conscious of its important value, was ever jealous of its possession, consequently always confided the command to their bravest officers, and such was the valour and intrepidity with which they invariably defended it, that it never opened its gates to an enemy until ceded by the treaty which closed the first Punic war, and obliged the Carthaginians entirely to evacuate Sicily; its port has witnessed the annihilation of fleets, and the earth around its walls has been the slaughter-house and grave of the bravest armies.

In the year 273, B. C., it successfully opposed a most furious attack from Pyrrhus, and obliged him to raise the siege, although he had, by the irresistible force of his arms, accomplished the expulsion of the Carthaginians from every other hold but that in the island; and it was on this occasion that Pyrrhus, when embarking, said, "I am leaving

a fine field of battle for the Romans and Carthaginians." The strength of its walls and the bravery of its inhabitants long preserved it from the fury of their Roman invaders, who closely invested and besieged it during the last nine years of the first Punic war, a siege ever memorable in the records of ancient deeds. It was at this period the Romans blocked up the port* by sinking vessels laden with enormous stones, when the Rhodian so skilfully evaded the vigilance of the Roman fleet, and when the brave, the enterprising Imilcon so ably defended the walls, and made such destructive sallies on the Roman camp. The conflicts on these occasions were dreadfully sanguinary to both parties, all the forces being more than once engaged at the same time. Impelled by their own personal valour and the intrepidity of their leaders, each fought with desperate obstinacy, the Lilybæans for the demolition, the Romans for the defence of the tremendous works and engines they had established round the walls for the siege of the town, and which Imilcon ultimately succeeded (at the suggestion of some Greek mercenaries) in totally consuming by fire; a strong breeze, that blew immediately on the enemy's works, favoured the design, and in a few hours enveloped towers, catapults, and battering-rams in the ruinous element; such was the fury of the flames that the massive brazen heads of the latter were entirely melted. Thus, by one wise and masterly stroke, were the besieged relieved from the appalling fate with which they were menaced by the already too successful effects of Roman enginery.

* Polybius tells us the stones thus sunk created an evident rising like a ragged shoal, upon which the celebrated Carthaginian galley grounded and fell into the hands of the enemy, who, by aid of its swiftness, ultimately succeeded in capturing the Rhodian and putting a stop to the intelligence he enabled the besieged to keep up with Carthage.

Notwithstanding, however, the irresistible bravery and skill of so well conducted a defence, fortune doomed Lilybæum to fall prostrate before the rising power of Rome; and by the treaty of Lutatius, the Carthaginians were obliged to abandon the fortress they had so long and so deservedly retained, the theatre on which they had displayed all their glorious achievements, and such splendid instances of military prowess.

Under the Romans the town seems to have increased in size, splendour, and luxury; magnificent aqueducts* supplied the inhabitants with water from the pure springs of the distant mountains, temples rose on every side for the various mystic rites of their pagan worship, and the ornamental as well as useful arts flourished under their guidance and patronage; the truth of which is attested by the innumerable relics that have at various periods been discovered, such as architectural ornaments, urns, coins, vases†, sarcophagi, &c. &c. It became the point from whence Rome hurled all the thunderbolts of war, and directed her vengeance against the faithless arms of Carthage‡.

* There were three aqueducts which brought water from the three fountains, about five miles eastward from the city, called since, by the Saracens, Rajala, Sadadi, and Sultani, which names they still retain. Vestiges of one of these aqueducts may be traced in different parts of the country between the town and the hills.

† A magnificent alabaster vase, in a high state of preservation, may be seen at the house of Countess Grignone.

‡ In the second Punic war, when Hannibal was pursuing his successes in Spain, and the Carthaginians supposed the entire attention of the Romans was directed to his movements, they sent a fleet of thirty-five galleys to attempt, by force or stratagem, the recovery of their favourite and lamented fortress of Lilybæum: but Æmilius, who was at that time prætor in Sicily, received information of their purpose, consequently put the city in a fit state of defence, and doubled his vigilance on that part of the coast, so that, immediately on the arrival of the Carthaginians, a Roman fleet sailed out of

It was from hence Scipio Africanus*, when proconsul of Sicily, sailed with an enormous fleet and army, to carry the war into Africa and humble the Carthaginian power, the embarkation of which was conducted with peculiar pomp and solemnity; a subject that has been interestingly and animatedly recorded by several of the Roman historians.—Scipio Æmilianus† also sailed from this port with the celebrated armament that finally levelled Carthage with the earth, and terminated the wars of her treacherous leaders against Rome.

The great, the noble minded Cicero, faithfully and honourably fulfilled the duties of his prætorship here; his justice and moderation long reigned in the hearts of all Sicilians, and during many ages they contrived to celebrate, with marked expressions of gratitude, the memory of this great man, whose eloquence had delivered them from the oppression and rapacity of the cruel, the avaricious Verres.

From the decline of the Roman power, little is known of the history of Lilybæum until the arrival of the Saracens, who, attracted thither by the port and convenience of situation, raised upon the ruins of Lilybæum‡ the present town which they called Marsa Allà (port of God), since corrupted into Marsala, the name it now bears. Under the followers of the crescent it grew wealthy and populous, and continued to flourish until the conquest of Sicily by the Norman count.

port to meet them, gave them battle, and, after a long and sanguinary conflict, completely routed the enemy, took seven of their galleys, and one thousand seven hundred of their soldiers, besides mariners.

* 203 B. C. † 148 B. C.

‡ When or by whom the ancient city was laid in ruin history seems perfectly silent.

Charles V. modernized, enlarged, and improved the fortifications, in which operation was discovered a beautiful and extensive tessalated pavement, between the promontory and the walls, supposed to have been a square belonging to the ancient city.

Legendary fame celebrates Marsala as the place of residence and sepulchre of the Sybil who burnt the two books of prophetic records, and establishes her place of resort at the well on the promontory, whither we walked after breakfast, and devoted an hour to the examination of the reputed retreat of the Cumæan prophetess: nothing, however, exists to favour the truth of such a tale, though it still enjoys the peculiar advantage of having a most abundant spring of water rising from its centre. The fountain, so remarkable for its position and antiquity, has claimed the attention of many ancient historians*: Diodorus says, "Hannibal landed with his mighty army at the well of Lilybæum;" and the Carthaginians applied the same appellation to their camp, previous to the building of the town. Antiquity has attached many fabulous stories to its waters, which were held sacred, and supposed by the ancients to endow those who drank of them with the powers of divination; in addition to which, the fair sex of the present day drink of them as a proof of their conjugal fidelity: upon what grounds, or whether the spring was *crowdedly* frequented, I could not learn; at the same time I am inclined to believe that the reputed *desire of knowledge*, which characterises the daughters of Eve, induces them to quaff it rather as a prophetic nectar than a test of virtue. The place is ornamented with poor frescos and mosaics, and the catholic fraternities have built over it a small church, dedicated to St. John

* Diodorus, Macrobius, and others.

the Baptist, in the idea that the prevailing superstitions might prove available to their cause, and attract to its altars the frequenters of the spring.

On our return we passed the Chiesa del Carmine, whose detached campanile, or bellfry, being unskillfully built out of the perpendicular, sensibly vibrates in high winds, and is vulgarly said by the inhabitants to be erected on a globe. We proceeded by the eastern gate to the convent of San Francesco e Paolo: it is a fine building, beautifully situated on an eminence commanding a lovely prospect of the sea, the town, and coast. It was the conventual hour of repast when we approached, and being unintentionally ushered into the presence of the feasting friars, we were enabled to observe them engaged in a more solid refection than would seem consistent with the rules of self-denial peculiar to their order, particularly on a fast day: their sleak forms appeared awfully distended by the effects of sated appetites, and their bright round faces flushed with the liberal use of generous potations, announced a preponderating feeling in favour of worldly enjoyment. With a salutation of courtesy we liberated them from the restraint which our presence might have caused, and walked through the convent. I reclined awhile in the casement of a latticed window to view the scene that spread before me, which, although beautiful and pleasing in itself, awakened in me still higher feelings of delight, by retracing the endless variety of objects and circumstances it calls to mind, and which shed so memorable a lustre over its ancient days.

The imagination loves to dwell on the romantic spell antiquity often weaves round the heart, and I indulged in the enthusiasm of my reverie until I became lost in a chain of thought, when my friend called me away. It is the association of the past with the present, that creates the

greatest charm of classic scenes, and the susceptibility of such enjoyment diffuses a species of glow over the days of our travels, that neither time or circumstance can obliterate, and must be reverted to in the days of age and retirement with the most lively feelings of interest.

A long range of catacombs furnishes the usual exhibition of smoke-dried skeletons of deceased friars, under the convent, which is kept, however, as cleanly and wholesome as a place of that kind will admit, and affords rather a good specimen of that very singular custom, observed by the monastic fraternities in Sicily, of preserving the deceased partners of their solitude.

At a short distance beyond the convent there is an immense extent of ancient quarries, from whence the Carthaginians and Romans took their stone for the building and fortifying of Lilybæum; their appearance is somewhat picturesque, being excavated in a variety of forms, with grotesque caverns of different dimensions; and time has added beauty to the place by the production of luxuriant shrubs and trees, which gracefully fold over the rocky masses, or rise in elegant clusters along the area of the quarry. The stone is curious, and merits the attention of the naturalist; it is an extremely porous marine concretion, enclosing, in deep strata, beds of fine scollop shells, many extremely perfect, and of a species not at present known to exist.

Being but fourteen miles from Mazara, we determined on making it our halting place for the night, consequently mounted our mules at one o'clock, and bid adieu to the interesting site of Lilybæum, with whose amusing records every classic reader must be already familiar who has perused the annals of Carthage, Greece, and Rome. The road leads along a low flat coast, by the side of the sea,

and although it is not remarkable for any prominent features of the sublime or beautiful, the presence of a sunny sea, sparkling with a thousand little objects, flitting to and fro over its silvery wave, animates the lonely prospect of the traveller: for I think there is a certain indescribable something in the murmurings of a sea shore, and the view over its wide sweep of waters, which tend to enliven the most dreary solitude, and dispose the mind to a train of pleasing meditation and reflections that very considerably redeem the absence of objects more gratifying to the eye.

About two miles from the town we crossed the river Marsala; from a long drought its bed was almost dry, in many parts stagnated, and scarcely afforded sufficient flowing water to enable the animals to indulge in the custom of paddling through and drinking, which (quite contrary to our cisalpine mode of treatment) is encouraged by the muleteers at every stream that happens to cross their road, so much so, that the beasts are frequently swelled out to such a degree, that they are rendered incapable of accelerating their pace beyond a walk, without making it painful to the rider; however, as that is the accustomed rate of journeying in Sicily, the travellers compassion is seldom put to the test.

The banks of the Marsala are remarkable for their arborescent luxuriance all the way almost to its source, and particularly for a variety of domestic trees, which betoken the favourable nature of the soil and climate; considerable remains also of a fine marble aqueduct are to be seen a few miles up, built by the Romans to supply Lilybæum.

Having crossed the stream, we passed the small town of Luna, where we fell into the train of an innumerable host of mules laden with barilla and grain for Mazara: the

the facetious babbling of their drivers, and the relation of their adventures, amused us excessively; for it is thus in an associated group, preceded by their animals, they travel in good fellowship from town to town, beguiling the hours of their journey by the narration of each others lives and achievements. At San Giuliano, being half way from Marsala, we parted company with our entertaining companions, and at the suggestion of the guide refreshed our steeds by half an hour's repose.

From San Giuliano to Baracco the only object that attracts the eye is an old castle or tower (called the Torre Sibilina) standing in picturesque ruin on the shore; what association authorised its appellation I could neither learn or conjecture; and beyond Baracco, a couple of miles to the right, Cape Ferro (or Fero* as it is now more usually spelt) stretches its rocky point towards Africa, said to be the nearest point of Sicily to that country. We observed the white sails of a number of fishing boats apparently approaching the cape with much eagerness, upon which I interrogated our guide, who significantly pointed to two or three clouds that were calmly crossing the sun's disk; from my previous acquaintance with the characteristic intrepidity of the Italian mariner, who, at the appearance of a silvery cloud in the sky, bears up for the nearest shore and betrays as much fear as if a convulsion of the elements threatened momentary distruction, I gave his dumb communications a proper interpretation, and, on further enquiry, found there was a commodious cove on the south side of the point, sheltered by a rock, much frequented by fishing boats and small craft in bad weather. From hence

* It is the Caput Federis of the Romans.

the coast is very low to the town of Mazara, which we entered after previously crossing the river* of that name; the sea advances a considerable distance inland at its embouchure, forming a sort of port for small vessels called by the natives Lo Stagno.

Mazara is a very inferior, irregularly built, dirty town, containing between eight and nine thousand inhabitants; it stands on the sea, and is surrounded by an old thick wall, thirty-five feet in height, principally of Norman structure, flanked by square towers at a dittance of every thirty yards, with a castle in the angle. The town boasts of a higher antiquity than Lilybæum, before the building of which it existed as a small fortress of the Greeks, and was taken possession of by the Carthaginians previous to the siege of Selinuntum. It was afterwards the emporium of the Romans, who colonized it, and under whom it attained the greatest importance as a town. The most ancient works of art, inscriptions, and coins are of that people, or Arabic, the latter of which have frequently been discovered in the opening of Saracenic tombs; for it was here the Saracens landed in the year 828, under their desperate leader Alcamac; who, to urge his soldiers to a greater spirit of resistance, caused to be burnt, after the disembarkation, every ship that transported them to the island, and from hence commenced the total Mussulmanic subjugation of Sicily. They colonized and gave the present name to the town, which continued to be inhabited by the turbaned

* This river derives its source from two springs, three miles from Salemi, called Sanagia and Ranicaldo, hence called by the Saracens Mazara, *which name they also afterwards gave to the town.* Salemi lies about twenty-two miles north-east of Marsala, so called from the Saracenic Salem, which expresses the amenity of the place.

† Diodorus, lib. 14.

sons of Ishmael, until they were driven out by the intrepid Count Roger, in the year of our Lord 1072, who fortified it in its present style.

Mazara is notorious for the unconscionable number of its ecclesiastical buildings and institutions, whose bellfries, turrets, and domes, present an appearance from the sea infinitely more attractive than the interior is calculated to inspire; before night came on we took a skiff, pulled round its antique walls, and took a distant view of the city, which, partly thrown in shade and in part faintly lighted up by the reflected glare of the departing sun, exhibited an object by no means unpleasing to the eye, and created a momentary illusion that made us forget the scene of filth we had so recently beheld.

There is one shapeless *piazza* in the town, in which are the cathedral, bishop's palace, and town hall; the former a rude Norman structure founded by Robert Guiscard, in 1080, who constituted the bishopric. Over the principal gate an equestrian statue of Count Roger destroying a Saracen, commemorates the success of that redoubtable warrior's arms against the infidel host; and in the porch there are three funerary urns, or sarcophagi, attributed to the Greeks, but they are of inferior workmanship, and evidently Roman, by the Latin inscriptions, which, although not now legible, have been preserved by the Sicilian annalists, who were enabled to decypher them less than a century ago. They are each ornamented with a bas relief, one of which represents an Amazonian contest; the other two though usually termed a Caledonian hunt and the rape of Proserpine, I think hitherto remain unsatisfactorily interpreted. Nothing further arrests the stranger's attention, excepting an object over the high altar, that seems more calculated to disgust and insult the feelings of a purely

pious mind than to stimulate that religious awe suited to a christian fane of the present enlightened age; it is a huge figure of a man, covered with stucco and bedaubed with paint, intended to represent the physical incorporation of the great creator's being; and, independent of the paganism of so barbarous an idea, such are its monstrosity and ugliness, that I am tempted to believe the bust has been taken from the rudder-head of some Dutch galliot in exchange for an absolution bestowed upon her crew.

Additional proofs of Sicilian ignorance and superstition are afforded in the churches of the Madonna of Paradise, and Saint Vitus, between which two saints the patronage of Mazara is divided. The former building is situated nearly a mile north-east of the town, and has a good road up to it for the easier approach of vehicles: a portrait of the Holy Virgin is kept enshrined in the tabernacle, and is said, when exposed to the multitude, to perform the miracle of shedding tears for the sins and wickedness of mankind. The ceremony of exposition is performed twice a year, on the fêtes of the assumption and visitation, and is accompanied with a variety of pompous and pagan-like rites, so as to render it the more imposing to the deluded wretches who attend: from the description I heard, it resembles the performance of a similar miracle which I have witnessed at Naples, of the liquefying the blood of St. Januarius.

The church of St. Vitus is within the town, and encloses, in a small chapel peculiarly dedicated to the saint, his statue in silver; it is held in profound reverence by the inhabitants, and, like the ancient Doges of Venice, has a state barge exclusively reserved for his use, in which, on the fête of St. Vitus, in August, he is towed in solemn procession to the stagno, accompanied by a pompous re-

tinue of the ecclesiastical, civil, and military authorities, with a band of music in their train: on his return to the port he is landed amidst an uproar of squibs, crackers, and the howlings of the crowd, borne on the shoulders of four men, and again dandled through the streets to the church, where he is deposited in the sainted shrine until the following year. I think the ceremony well entitled to the appellation of St. Vitus's dance, and when coupled with the mummery of the abovementioned one, ought in this enlightened era of christianity to guard us against the influence of Roman Catholic priestcraft. Were the enthusiastic votaries of catholic emancipation to visit these countries, and take an unprejudiced, unimpassioned view of the dangerous effects resulting to society from the diabolical abuses of that religion*, I am satisfied they would readily change their sentiments on the subject, and uphold our protestant establishment as the most liberal and best calculated to secure the happiness and independence of the human mind.

Mazara gives a name to one of the three great divisions of the island called vales; namely, the Val di Mazara, which extends from the river Salso all round the west and north-west coast to the river Rocella; the Val di Mona, or (as it is now corrupted) Val Demona, includes the eastern

* Many of my readers I have no doubt will observe, that the practice of the religion may be divested of the abuses. No!—And let me not be considered illiberal when I say, that as long as the Roman Catholic religion exists, so long will it remain more or less identified with those abuses, in proportion as it is tollerated or encouraged by the state; and the followers of its worship must (as always has been the case), either from ignorance, become the servile instruments of its superstitions, or from more reasonable understandings, live in a comparative state of apostacy, and not unfrequent contempt of their ministers. I argue not from hypothesis, but from observation amongst millions of God's creatures, whom I have seen living in a state of intellectual abasement under the iron sway of their priestly confessors.

coast, from the Rocella to Catania; and the Val di Noto from the latter place to the river Salso. This mode of division was first established by the Saracens, and afterwards adopted by the Normans, since which it has continued to the present day.

The Val di Mazara, of the three, is the most productive in pulse and grain of all sorts, the vine is largely cultivated, and being of a calcareous soil it is favourable to the growth of the olive: it abounds in goats and sheep, and furnishes more cattle than any other part of the island. It is the least wooded; and its mountains are, generally speaking, precipitous, sterile, and perfectly bare. Cotton is largely cultivated round the town of Mazara, and forms, with grain and barilla, an article of considerable export from that place, where there is necessarily a caricatore, or government granary, on the same principle as our bonded warehouses, in which the proprietors deposit their grain for exportation; they are subterranean excavations, generally (if the local stratification will admit) in the rock, with magazines built over them; they produce an incredibly enormous revenue to the king, not by rental, but the profits on the quantity gained by remeasurement* to the exporter.

Wednesday, 24th November.—The bright dawn of the morning induced us to quit our miserable tenement as early as we could obtain egress, and at the solicitations of an importunate ciceroni went to visit the old Norman castle. It is remarkable for having been the residence of

* The grain is received and returned to the proprietor by measurement, consequently, two or three days before it is measured into the owner's possession, it is brought from the subterranean conservatory into the stores above, during which period it swells considerably by exposure to the atmosphere, and necessarily gains in bulk.

Robert Guiscard, and once boasted the possession of the brave Count Roger's shield*, bearing the following memorable inscription: *Dextera Domini fecit virtutem: dextera Domini exaltavit me,* which he adopted after the vision of the knight on the white horse, previous to his celebrated victory over the Saracens at Cerami; and which afterwards continued in use amongst all his Norman successors.

The upper rooms witnessed the last mournful days of the cruel though accomplished Joan of Naples; and in the year 1494 became the retreat of Alphonso, who, intimidated by the arms of Charles of France, basely abdicated the Neapolitan throne. Thus we felt no reason to regret having accepted the services of our laquais de place, particularly as we were further requited by his information of an ancient tomb in the convent of San Michele, which we visited en passant, and found it by the inscriptions to be a Roman one of the family of Albinus.

We quitted the walls of Mazara at nine o'clock, and proceeded towards Castel Vetrano by the way of Campo Bello; at a distance of three miles the road is intersected by the small river of Delia or Arena†, by which name it is more generally known, but is unconnected, I believe, with any circumstance of antiquity that can yield interest or immortality to its stream; from hence it is seven miles through a fertile plain to Campo Bello, where we arrived at noon, put up the mules in a fundaco, and went to see the quarries from whence the stone was taken to build the

* Whether the shield is still in being, and if so, where it now reposes I could gain no information.

† This river takes its rise from the waters of three fountains beyond the town of Salemi, where they unite into one stream called there the Salemi, beyond which it maintains the appellation of Delia (called by the Saracens Beligero), and at the lower part the Arena, on account of the quantity of white sand near its embouchure.

ancient town of Selinon; they are not far from the town, and are well entitled to the consideration of the traveller, who at one coup d'œil is furnished with a comprehensive view of the manner adopted by the ancients of working out the enormous masses they employed in building their temples. As the Egyptians did their obelisks, they at once cut into form, and finished whilst in the quarry, the different individualities, such as capitals, shaft pieces, and architrave lengths: specimens of which still remain projecting out of the rock, to corroborate the fact, in the same unfinished state they were left by the Grecian labourers four and twenty hundred years ago; hence they saved both time and labour by thus diminishing the mass that was to be transported from the quarry to the place of building. The stone is of a fine compact marine concretion, of a yellowish brown colour, enclosing, like that of Marsala, large well preserved scollop shells.

Campo Bello* is a small town of about two thousand inhabitants, whose squalid looks betray the insalubrity of the place, perhaps occasioned by the marshes in the vicinity towards the sea. At two o'clock we continued our journey, and spent the remainder of the day at Castel Vetrano: it is five miles distant, and is the Castrum Veteranum of the Romans, and now a town containing nearly 15,000 inhabitants, healthily situated on a gentle rise in the midst of an extensive fertile plain, abounding in vineyards and olive trees, whose oil is of the most superior quality; notwithstanding, however, the native richness of the soil, and the bounties nature has placed within the proprietors' reach,

* Campo Bello, called by the Saracens Ramussara. It is singular to observe all the way from the Latomia or quarry to the site of Selinus, the country strewed with pieces of columns, &c., as if from some sudden interruption they had been thrown down and left by the carriers.

the greater proportion of the land seems left uncultivated and neglected. It is in the barony of the Duke of Monte Leone, who has a palace in the town, but seldom inhabits it excepting at the period appointed for the payment of rents.

In order to command sufficient leisure for the examination of the many interesting objects our next day's excursion embraced, we retired early, and rose with the dawn of the following morning. The road, though but a rugged path, leads through an agreeable woody country, abounding in game, which we repeatedly started as we occasionally diverged from the beaten track and passed through the underwood. We soon descried the sea before us, over which Aurora, just then emerging from the horizon, spread a blaze of saffron hue, and shortly afterwards shed a stream of light along the shore that enabled us to discover the venerable piles of Selinuntum rising from their solitary waste, appearing at the first view of a stranger's eye like the crowded habitations of a populous town. They are called by the natives Pileri di Castel Vetrano from whence they are eight miles distant.

The ancient city was founded* 627 B. C. by a party of Grecians from Megara Hybla, who, on account of the overgrown state of that colony, departed under the direction of their leader Pammilius, and settled between the two rivers Belici and Madiuni; a choice of situation that, according to my ideas, reflected little credit on either their judgment, penetration, or foresight, since, from its entire exposure to the sea, it offered no advantages as a port, and was even at that period reputed for the insalubrity of its air, particularly in the peculiar part they afterwards fixed upon for

* Thucidydes, 6th book.

the site of their city. They drove out the Phœnicians, who up to that time inhabited the surrounding country; and the Madiuni (from the quantity of wild parsley with which its banks abounded), they* called Selinon†, a name that they also gave to their new town, which was built on a small elevation, and surrounded with thick massive walls, to avoid the ruinous effects of the stagnated sea water that lay to the westward, now termed, according to the Saracenic appellation, Yhalicò. Their massive walls, however, availed them not, for some years afterwards a dreadful pest visited the inhabitants, caused by the effluvia from the corrupted water, and continued its destructive influence until the‡ philanthropic Agrigentine philosopher Empedocles, at his own expense, caused the waters of the two rivers to be conducted by channels through the morass, which carried off the stagnated matter, and staid the ravages of the pest. Divine honours were instituted for the great philosopher, and a magnificent statue was erected to celebrate the occasion, and bear in memory the gratitude of the citizens towards their worthy liberator.

Selinus, or rather Selinon, speedily attained a surprising degree of wealth and greatness; they adorned their city with buildings of enormous magnitude, raised splendid temples to their gods, and became the formidable rivals of the Segestans, with whom they were in a state of incessant domestic warfare about the possession of frontier lands, which, as is almost invariable on such occasions, engaged

* Pliny and Ptolemy.

† ΣΕΛΕΙΝΟΝ, parsley, still abounds there, and grows very luxuriantly: it is the Apium Petroselinum of Linæus, a fine large complicated umbel, and rich white flower, which opens in June, and, mingled with other shrubs and plants, adds great beauty to the banks.

‡ Dionysius Laertius in his lives of the philosophers.

the neighbouring powers in the contest, and ultimately involved the whole of the Grecian republics in Sicily in ruinous hostility, not only with each other, but afterwards with the foreign powers they called to their aid, who, ever ready to pursue their own ambitious views, were necessarily but too glad to gain a footing in a country that offered so many temptations to the conquerors. It was governed by tyrants, and constantly convulsed by internal dissentions or external hostility, sometimes espousing the cause of Agrigentum, Syracuse, or Carthage; at others opposing them, as most suited the immediate purposes of their interest or ambition. The first destructive siege that is recorded of this city is the one by Hannibal, who, to revenge the fate of his father Gisco*, and his grandfather Hamilcon, resolved on razing it to the ground. He landed, as before observed, at Lilybæo in 410 B. C.†, with one hundred thousand men, and closely invested the walls during nine days, at the expiration of which time, notwithstanding the desperate resistance of the besieged, he beat down the walls by the immense engines he reared against them for that purpose, and took the city by assault.

Historians describe this as one of the most sanguinary and desperate sieges, on the part of the assailed, that is known in antiquity; old and young, women and children, all took an active part in the glorious cause of defending their homes and their gods, and exemplified a degree of firmness as well as valour on the occasion, that loudly demands our strongest expressions of sympathy and admiration. In spite of the enemy's numbers, twice they were driven with dreadful slaughter from the gaping breaches

* Gisco was banished by the Carthaginians for his father Hamilcon's losses at Himera, and he resided in Selinon during the term of his exile.

† See Pausanias, lib. 6, and the interesting descriptions of Diodorus.

they had made, and even when they at length succeeded in entering the town, the Selinuntines continued to oppose them with equal fury, contending every inch of ground from the walls to the streets, and from the streets to the houses, from the windows and roofs of which the women and children were employed hurling enormous stones on the assailants that caused frightful destruction amongst their ranks, and so exasperated Hannibal, that he wreaked his vengeance by putting sixteen thousand of the inhabitants to the sword, dragged the remainder into slavery, and after the accustomed work of pillage and rapine, set fire to the town and destroyed the temples *.

It was on this occasion Empedion, the old friend of Hannibal, was sent by the Syracusans as ambassador, after the siege, to implore the Carthaginian to allay his vengeance, and spare the temples, which at that period boasted greater magnificence than any in Sicily. Hannibal received his friend with unchanged kindness and courtesy; but in answer said, that "The gods no longer inhabited the temples of such a perfidious people, and the law would not allow those places that had been consecrated to them to be converted to profane use, therefore he should throw them down."

Shortly after this, Hermocrates, the great captain of the Syracusan army, who had been ungratefully banished after his memorable defeat of Nicias, came to Selinon, easily gained possession, and called in all the inhabitants that had deserted it; then rebuilt the walls, and carried his arms towards Syracuse, where he vainly attempted to obtain the government.

* The only clemency shown by Hannibal was to the women, who fled with their infants to the temples; and that arose more from a feeling of interest than compassion, for knowing by repute the Selinuntine fanes enclosed immense treasures, he strictly enjoined his army to respect them, that he might more deliberately plunder and destroy them himself.

In the first Punic war, Selinon attached itself to the cause of Rome, and afterwards took an active part with that power against Syracuse; however, having materially suffered in the successive wars between Carthage and Rome, it again sunk into ruin, and became almost deserted; upon which the Romans * colonized it, again rebuilt, and, according to Ulpianus, endowed it with the privilege† of exemption from imposts. But it never again rose to any degree of consequence: the last slumbering sparks of freedom that animated its inhabitants, and kindled at the recollection of their ancient fame, burst forth during the factions of the servile wars; but it was like the last efforts of animation before death, and the spirit of their departed glory and freedom became for ever buried under the ruins and devastation of the middle ages.

Selinuntum was the first town in Sicily that was destined to fall a prey to the fury of the annihilating host under the infidel Alcamac. On landing at Mazara, in the year 828 of Christ, the Moorish commander directly proceeded thence surrounded the walls, and, after a few days' siege, entered the city, which, for the purpose of intimidating the remainder of the Sicilians to a more easy submission, he gave up to the atrocious treatment of the infuriated Mussulmans; and such was the general destruction and horrible perpetration of their cruelties, that they failed not in meeting his most sanguine wishes, creating a panic through the island that caused many cities to anticipate the arrival of the Saracenic general, by sending him their keys, accompanied with an unqualified submission.

* When Sicily became a Roman province, at which period its name was changed by the Romans from Selinon to Selinuntum.

† Called by the Romans, Jus Italicum.

Several of the Sicilian annalists go so far as to assert, that independent of other acts of barbarous outrage committed at Selinuntum, Alcamac caused many of the most important citizens to be put over the fire in boiling cauldrons.

They gave to the town and country around the appellation of Bidel el Bargoth (land of fleas), I suppose from the number of those assailants they had to encounter; and to this day it is styled by the Sicilians Terra delli Pulci; although Captain Smith, in his memoirs, contradicts the Saracenic derivation, and ingeniously attributes the Italian term to a corruption of Polluce or Pollux, to which deity, in conjunction with his brother Castor, he asserts (upon what authority I have been unable to discover) one of the temples was consecrated. However, supposing the fact established, why should that particular temple be selected to distinguish the place, when a larger or more noble and more celebrated one in every respect existed, and which, upon the authority of Herodotus, Diodorus, and Pausanias, we know to have been dedicated to the Olympian Jupiter. Besides which, what association can there be between the name of Pollux and the Saracenic Bidel el Bargoth, which latter several Sicilian annalists, since the middle ages, are agreed was decidedly applied by the infidels?

Selinuntum having been, with the rest of Sicily, upwards of two hundred years in the hands of the Saracens, had become a populous town, and was by them again rendered a strong hold, which was the last in their possession, and making a determined resistance against the Norman arms under Count Roger, was entirely razed to the ground, and every inhabitant driven from the land. Thus ended the calamitous career of the unfortunate Selinus, and a ruined heap of massive parts alone remain to mark the site of her ancient glory.

I approached the place thus rendered sacred to antiquity

not without some feelings of reverence, and with sensations similar to those we sometimes experience in our contemplations over the cemetery of departed worth and fame. This indeed is the tomb of Selinuntine greatness. It now presents nought but a scene of dreary solitude and silence, for the surrounding country remains deserted and forsaken, and is tenanted alone by the spontaneous productions of nature, such as the myrtle, the oleander, wild parsley, and the palmetto, which give an appearance of richness to the earth, and in some measure redeem the absent fruits of the cultivator's hand. In the abundance of the latter plant, the traveller will recognise with delight the justly-applied agnomen of Virgil *.

Malaria spreads its baneful influence over the adjacent plains; and the poisonous waters of the Yhalico still continue to emit their destructive vapours in spite of the generous Empedocles, whose mighty labours have for many ages been hidden in the drifting sand.

The town was situated on two hills, which are now interspersed with melancholy piles of dislocated architectural fragments, whose extraordinary magnitude strikes the ob-

* *Palmosus Selinus*, Æneid 3d. Many visitors to the ruins of Selinus, on not seeing an abundance of that species most commonly known by the name of the palm, such as the lofty date, &c., suppose either the worthy bard's epithet inapplicable, or that the characteristic trees have, from time or circumstance, entirely disappeared; unacquainted with the endless variety with which that class or species abounds, and that the plant called by the Sicilians *giumara*, is in fact the one alluded to by Virgil; which is corroborated by one of the coins of Selinon, bearing on one side a head, and the reverse a man holding in his left hand a branch of this plant. It is the *chamærops humilis* of Linnœus, or dwarf fan palm; it is a low plant, growing very much like our fern; the leaves are digitated with from twelve to fifteen sword-shaped divisions, of a glaucous green colour, emanating from the edge, and in a state of expansion very much resembling a fan. It abounds throughout Sicily, but particularly in the Val di Mazara, and around the ruins of Selinuntum. The inhabitants make various uses of it, such as for thatching, brooms, basket-making, &c. &c.

server with surprise at the tremendous efforts that must necessarily have been employed by the ancients to raise the splendid fabrics they composed.

The eastern hill commands a pleasing prospect of the place and sea; it falls with rather an abrupt descent towards the beach, displaying, on a plain along its summit, the prostrate vestiges of three temples, which lie in a parallel line from north to south, at a distance of forty yards from each other, with their porticos fronting the east. The two smaller ones are parallelogramic peripteres, and the largest pseudodipteral; all, however, of simple, massive, austere Doric, but differing in dimensions, and so much in the style of finishing, that they are evidently the productions of different ages.

The southernmost, or one nearest the sea, is the least distinct in its parts, and lies in more confused masses than the others. Its area measures about one hundred and ninety feet long, and seventy-two broad; the columns are fluted, with a diameter of seven and a half feet at their base.

The centre temple is somewhat less; it had six columns in front, and thirteen at the sides, also fluted, but only six feet in diameter, though of equal length, which takes somewhat away from the characteristic massiveness of the Doric, and gives them the appearance of an Ionic shaft. The capitals are more finished and ornamental than the other, and altogether it must have been a handsomer building. It measures about one hundred and sixty-nine feet at the sides, with a breadth of seventy-nine feet, and lies in more regular heaps than the above-mentioned one.

The northernmost temple * is considerably the largest,

* It is worthy of observation, that almost all the ancient temples of the Greeks, whether in the mother countries or in the colonies, were built with similar proportions, namely, having one more than double the number of columns in the front, to form the sides; and although instances are known to the contrary, it may be considered as a general rule.

8577

being of colossal dimensions and grandeur. It is the celebrated one of Jupiter Olympus, noticed by Diodorus and Herodotus, so renowned for its ornamental riches, and the immense treasure it enclosed, peculiarly consecrated to the omnipotent deity of the pagans, all of which was transferred by Hannibal to Carthage, after his destruction of the city. Amongst other splendid objects of art this mighty fane possessed, was the magnificent statue of Bacchus, described by Pausanias, which had, most inimitably carved, head, hands, and feet, of the purest ivory.

The edifice being pseudodipteral, had eight columns in front, and seventeen at the sides, with a double row in the portico. The length of the upper area, forming the common plinth to the columns, is three hundred and forty feet, and one hundred and sixty broad. The pillars are eleven feet in diameter at the base, tapering away to nine feet ten inches under the capitals, and are all plain, except the four at the angles of the portico, which are fluted and filleted. Parts of two shafts (one in the portico and the other at the side) are the only standing remains of this tremendous heap.

The capitals are formed out of one solid block, and are remarkable for the unusual bulkiness of the ovolos, one of which lies inverted in the centre of the heap, whose abacus measures thirteen feet in width, and by its side a solid block twenty-two feet long, belonging to the architrave. The art of transferring such ponderous blocks from place to place, and raising them to the heights required, proves the ancients to have been possessed of a more intimate and perfect knowledge of mathematical principles, and the application of mechanical powers, than the moderns seem inclined to give them credit for. The wheel, a power most in use at the present day, is known to have been also applied amongst them, by the testimony of a

very ancient piece of bas-relief seen in the wall of a house near the market-place of Capua, which represents labourers occupied in raising blocks of stone to the summit of a fortress they are building, by aid of the wheel.

To the west of these ruins may be traced the ground-plan of three other temples, originally separated from the former by the ancient harbour which ran up in a circular form between the two.

After the occupation of measuring, we retired to breakfast, which the faithful guide had already taken from our basket and tastefully arranged under the spreading branches of a wild fig tree, that has, like many other tenants of the vegetable world, sprung up in picturesque beauty through the crevices of these ruined heaps. I could not help contemplating the scene as a moral memento, as well as a lively illustration of man's insignificance when opposed to his Maker, as I viewed nature thus assuming her prerogative over the weak and evanescent works of human power, and smiling as it were in contempt of man's proudest, greatest efforts.

Exercise and exertion furnished excitement to appetite, and the enjoyment of a refreshing repast was indescribably enhanced by the attractions of so classical a retreat. The interesting fragments, as they lay scattered before us, furnished an endless source of delightful ideas; and whilst indulging in the sweets of physical repose, we roved through the beguiling path of fancy to the time before these proud temples bowed to the yoke of Carthaginian * power. What

* The destruction of these temples has furnished matter for great doubt amongst modern enquirers, as to whether they owe their total annihilation to Hannibal's fury, or to that of more modern barbarians. Ancient historians are silent as to the *extent* of injury caused by the former, though I have no hesitation in concluding, from their expressions, that he was the *principal* author of the devastation, supposing, at the same time, that parts were left standing which have since been thrown down by earth-

splendour, what magnificence, must they have exhibited in the golden days of Selinon! They evidently were the greatest structures of Sicily, eclipsing in point of magnitude even the boasted fanes of the Agrigentines.

No satisfactory authority exists that enables us to ascertain to which of the Heathen deities the two first-described were consecrated, although they have been variously baptized by garrulous guides, and the hypothetical imaginings of modern travellers. Against the former I feel it a duty to warn those of my readers who may at any future period visit this interesting country, recommending them not to place the slightest confidence in any information communicated by such cicerones, beyond what is purely local, for they only lead to error and confusion, which greatly tend to destroy the interest of classical research.

An immense mole, stretching from the mouth of the Madiuni into the sea, formed the ancient port of Selinon, but not a vestige indicates the place. The scythe of time has accomplished the work of destruction commenced by Pagan enemies and barbarous hordes. The fragments are all buried in the sand, and a modern watch-tower now guards the site of the departed mole.

Not far from thence, on the eastern bank, was the ancient cemetery, composed of deep tombs separate from each other, and walled inside with prodigious blocks of stone, that might have bid defiance to all but the desolating fury of the invader*.

quake, as is very evidently the case, from the regularity with which twelve of the columns have fallen, and continue to lie with their capitals and shaft-pieces in uninterrupted line.

The singular and unaccountable propensity which the Carthaginians evinced for laying open the depositories of the dead, may be traced in their frequent sieges of the Grecian cities of Sicily.

CHAPTER IV.

At ten o'clock we bid adieu to the mournful remains of ill-fated Selinon, and shortly after forded the Belici*; it is a considerable stream in the winter, and impassable after a fall of rain: it meanders for miles between high sloping banks full of romantic wildness and picturesque beauty, and whose summits are thickly crowned with wood of both the shrubby as well as arborescent productions: the stately elm towers over thick spreading bushes of the willow and the tamarisk, which latter grows in as great luxuriance and perfection as I ever saw it in any of the southern climes.

The Belici is, according to Ptolemy and Pliny, the Hypsa of antiquity, though by some authors called the Crimisus; however, it is the stream that proved so fatal to Carthaginian blood; and if, in their excursions along the shores of Sicily, the lovers of freedom should cross its waters, let them pause awhile on the memorable banks, and, whilst in the admiration of nature's loveliness, pay a tribute of recollection to the cause of independence, by contemplating the scene where liberty unfurled her banners, and valour gloriously triumphed over oppression: for it was here the magnanimous Timoleon, after subverting

* It is three miles from the temples, from whence stones were taken many years ago for the purpose of building a bridge; but the plan, for want of energy, was abandoned, and the traveller is left to scramble over the best way he can; however, higher up the stream we were told a bridge existed.

the Syracusan yoke of tyranny, bravely opposed with his handful of warriors the Carthaginian host of invaders*, and, by one of the most brilliant victories that is recorded of ancient days, liberated Sicily from their oppressive arms. Fortune doubtless favoured the Corinthian leader; but it was superiority of judgment and military skill that taught him to profit by the advantages that were placed within his reach; which, combined with the most extraordinary feats of intrepidity and firmness, enabled him to succeed in totally defeating an army eight times as numerous as his own, and one of the most splendid in point of equipment that Carthage had ever sent into Sicily.

In my enthusiasm, I made a libation from the stream to the Corinthian victor, and offered up a prayer that another Timoleon might soon spring up, and again restore industry and happiness under the smiling influence of freedom.

The river owes it present name to a corruption of the one given it by the Saracens, namely, Belich. The country to the east of it is celebrated for the abundance of cattle as well as game, which we witnessed as we proceeded along the road, having met several immense herds grazing about the hills; they are generally of a bright red colour, with such tremendous horns that they absolutely appear burdensome to the animals that bear them, qualities that characterize the whole of the Sicilian cattle. We soon descended into a swampy plain, and crossed the river

* In the year 340 B.C. This army, consisting of sixty thousand Carthaginians, landed under Himilcon at Lilybæo, for the purpose of redeeming the ill success of the disgraced Mago, by spreading ruin and devastation throughout the Grecian colonies in Sicily. For a description of the battle which took place, June 13th of the same year, vide Plutarch's Life of Timoleon.

Leone, whose embouchure forms a small port called Palu, which is defended by the watch tower seen standing on a hill near the sea.

The ruddy Cape of St. Marco bounds the horizon towards the south-east, presenting rather an interesting object, with the tower and battery on its summit. From hence the road leads through a country strewed with olive plantations; and after passing the rivers Cavaretto, Carabi, and Cavalazzo, we entered the walls of Sciacca about six o'clock. The approaches, as well as the whole country encircling this town, are indescribably fertile, and, aided by the local amenity of Sciacca, furnishes by no means an unpleasing object for contemplation to the traveller as he is slowly advancing on the back of his jaded mule. Clusters of immense orange and lemon trees, thickly spangled with their golden fruits, are seen on every side; gardens shaded with the rich blossomed almond and the spreading fig adorn the lands around the walls, whilst the lofty cedar here and there lifts his gloomy head over groups of the pistachio with which this place abounds, and whose nuts I soon learnt formed, with other fruits, a principal article of exportation; it is the *pistacia lentiscus* of Linnæus, or mastic tree: the male and female flowers are on different plants, consequently do not fructify unless planted contiguous to each other, or as is thus usually managed here. When the female flowers are open, the gardeners put the blossom of the male tree (distinguished here by the name of scornabecco) into pots, and place them on the upper branches of the female tree, which never fails producing fructification.

Sciacca is the Θερμα ιδατα of the Greeks, and belonged to the territory of the Selinuntines, under whom it was at first a mere hamlet, and only visited occasionally for the

benefit of its waters, whose celebrity increasing, gave importance and magnitude to the place: it is distinguished by the birth of Agathocles, one of the greatest tyrants of antiquity; his cruelties and inhuman atrocities are too well known to my readers for me to enlarge on them. His father, Carcinus, was a potter of Reghium in Calabria, but from persecution settled here, and brought his art to that perfection which afterwards obtained so much renown throughout Sicily. Camarina, too, flourished in the same way, and soon rivalled the manufactory of the Selinuntine colony: their vases* were so delicate and beautiful in point of form and decoration, that they became an object of luxury, and were sought after with the same avidity as is the foreign porcelain of the present day. The town was, in the time of the Romans, called Thermæ Selinuntiæ; and in more modern times received from the Saracens the appellation of Sheich†, of which Sciacca is a Sicilian cor-

* These vases are of peculiar beauty, and I think considerably surpass those of the Etruscans both in elegance of shape and the choice of subject which adorns their exterior. They have been found in all parts of Sicily in the various excavations particularly of tombs, where it was the custom of the friends of the deceased to deposit them, containing offerings to the memory of those ties that bound them together in life. Baron Udica, of Palazzolo, has minutely examined the different species of vases that have hitherto been discovered, and has been enabled to trace the progressive improvement from the rudest specimen to the most finished: he has classified them into five divisions: first, rude figures painted in black, on clay ground, with drapery formed by simple scratches; second, black painted ground, with the figures left in the clay, and drapery lined as before; third, black ground, with figures painted in different colours; fourth, figures relieved from the ground, and in better character; fifth, in still higher relief, more finished, and with better composition. The subjects of the first are generally Pagan sacrifices; of the latter, scenes from the Trojan war, or Grecian fable.

† Sheich signifies chief, and was appropriated to this place because made the station of an Arabic chief during the Moorish occupation.

ruption. At the expulsion of the infidels, Count Roger converted it into a city, and gave it to his daughter Julietta, who founded several christian churches and nunneries: Frederick II. afterwards surrounded it with a more solid wall, which was enlarged and modernized in its present form under Charles V., and it is now become a place of twelve thousand inhabitants, from whence corn*, fruits, sulphur, and barilla are taken in considerable quantities. It is picturesquely situated at the foot of Mount Calogero, and built on a bold rock hanging over the sea, from whence, aided by the prominent forms of its public edifices, it assumes the most flattering appearance. Its mineral springs, which from the earliest ages of the ancients have administered their efficacious qualities, are still renowned for their almost infallible powers in a variety of diseases, and would be invaluable to Europe if the island were in a more civilized state, or the town better provided with comforts and accommodation than its present wretched aspect announces. The springs are numerous; and although their debouchments, being so contiguous to each other, seem to indicate a subterranean communication, yet from the very different properties each decidedly possesses, they must necessarily pass through totally distinct strata, composed of different mineral ingredients. They are principally thermal, the highest degree of heat being 120° of Fahrenheit, which is considerably greater than the celebrated springs of Bath: they are strongly impregnated with the scoria of iron, sulphur, salt, with a small proportion of vitriol, and have proved of incredible benefit to partial palsy of the limbs induced by rheumatism, cutaneous

* From the incommodiousness of the port, and the anchorage being nearly a mile out, vessels make no stay here, but just run in and take their consignments as they pass down the coast.

disorders, wounds, and affections of the urinary organs. I could nowhere, however, obtain a strict analysis, little more being known at Sciacca than the effects produced by their use. Modern bathing-houses have been built, with contiguous dressing-rooms appropriated to each sex; but they do not *yet* constitute an establishment capable of competition with the Roman thermæ, whose luxuries of the Apodyterium, Laconicum, and Unctuarium, are not attainable to the frequenters of the Sciaccanese baths.

Our opinion of the inhabitants of this town was not much predisposed in their favour by the first specimen we experienced of their conduct, either as social christians or the professed entertainers of wearied travellers: after riding through a crowd, principally composed of friars, priests, and monks, we entered, at the direction of our guide, the habitation we were destined to repose in for the night; it was gloomy, filthy, and miserably cold, and the first subject of entertainment that presented itself was a group of its fiend-like inhabitants engaged in a tumultous affray, which, from the screams of the women, the irascible physiognomies and uplifted knives of the men, I observed wore a more desperate character than the effects of a common family brawl; however, by the advice of our guide, who, I suppose, had learnt his philosophy from experience rather than theory, and well knew that interference on the part of a stranger is too frequently attended with more aggravating than pacifying results, we retired from the scene of action to the chamber assigned for our use, and patiently awaited a cessation of hostilities for an introduction to the proprietor of the albergo, who at length came forth in the form of a woman, and, like another Alecto, after the execution of some evil design, demanded, in a very inhospitable tone, what we had got

for dinner; a question that, to the generality of my readers, will doubtless appear somewhat singular, as applied from a host to a guest; but in Sicily such is the want of resources at the generality of halting places, that it is the custom of travellers to carry their own provisions, which, on arriving at an inn, they give to be warmed up or prepared in the way most suitable to their taste, depending alone on the store of the innkeeper for bread and wine, which may be had good almost throughout the island. As ill-luck would have it, our appetites (having been sharpened by the keen air of the morning and the exercise of lionizing) were little occupied at the preceding meal of breakfast in the provident consideration of future necessities; the consequence of which was, our stock became nearly exhausted, and reduced us to the scanty, unsavoury fare of the fury-looking hostess, who, making an extraordinary effort to become gracious, promised, in our emergency, to serve us up the best of her larder; however, we experienced the truth of the old French adage—"*A bon apetit il 'ne faut point de sauce,*" for hunger perfectly reconciled us to that which, on any other occasion, would have been repulsive to the palate.

Before dinner we walked on the College terrace, which commands a romantic prospect of the sea; and afterwards visited the corn magazines, which are curiously excavated in the rock over the shore.

Friday, 26th.—At sunrise we set out on an excursion to the mountain of Saint Calogero, to which is attached so many monkish legends—so many papal superstitions. It gradually rises from the town, towards the eastward, to a height of one thousand and forty feet above the level of the sea, and is covered, in every direction, with curious caverns, grottos, mineral wells, and hot springs. It de-

rives its appellation from the former residence of a hermit, who professed to be of that sect termed, by the Greek church, Calogeri *, and devoted himself to the care of those invalids who visited the top of the mountain for the benefit of the waters. Some years after his death he was succeeded by a tribe of Romish monks, who created the present establishment of convent and hospital; and availing themselves of the then prevailing ignorance, canonized the departed ascetic † under the name of Calogero, who, they asserted, had been sent by St. Peter to heal the sick, and cure those possessed of the devil: they constituted him the patron of their new foundation, and afterwards caused him to be adopted as the tutelary saint of Sciacca, where, to this day, he equally participates the affections of its inhatants with the Holy Virgin and the Supreme Deity!

At the summit of the mountain, and under the convent there are three grottos cut out of the rock, from one of which excessively hot mineral vapours exhale, forming an excellent sudatory, and used with wonderful effect for a variety of infirmities; seats are formed in the rock, over which antique inscriptions once announced the peculiar disease the heat of each bench was most suited to; but the letters, which it is said were Phœnician, are nearly effaced with thick incrustations formed over them by the unctuous nature of the steam.

To the right of this is a most curious and extensive cave,

* From Καλος and γερων. The peculiarity of this sect was, that they chose the tops of mountains for their residence, Mount Athos, in Greece, being celebrated as the first place of their resort. They followed the rule of Saint Basil, and were the most austere of the order.

† The fete of the saint is celebrated in June, when the sick flock up in crowds to the chapel on the mountain, and make their offerings at his shrine, for which they consequently receive in return the priest's blessing, and a promise of speedy relief.

with a variety of winding passages and perforations that distil hot waters from almost every pore, and is, with the last mentioned one, particularly celebrated by Diodorus as being formed by the old architect Dædalus when he fled from the indignation of Minos. But there are many others, together with wells, exhibiting phenomena that cannot fail to produce gratification to the curious observer as well as the naturalist.

The mountain is composed principally of argilla and lime, enclosing beds of sulphur, mixed with a variety of other mineral substances, which, being traversed by numerous springs, occasion the boiling vapours that are seen issuing from every crevice, and the gurgling noises that are heard in many of the holes and wells. The earth is sterile and unproductive all round, and almost always in a state of fermentation; no verdure is seen but the palmetto or giumarre.

At noon we descended, mounted our mules, and bade adieu to Sciacca; the road leads between the mountain just described and the sea, over a hilly uncultivated country, covered with the palmetto, wild parsley, and thistles; and the winding nature of the path varied the scenery as we went along, by occasionally approaching, sometimes receding from the sea. Five miles from Sciacca we crossed the river Mecaudo; and shortly after, another small river, having to our left a chain of bold mountains, presenting their rugged sides towards the sea. It is on the summit of one of those rocky heights, apparently inaccessible to man, that the ancient town of Triocola stood; a place that holds so conspicuous a character in Roman history, as being the birth place of that rebellious spirit which occasioned the commencement of the servile wars against Rome, and during four years spread consternation even amongst her consular armies. Its position is par-

ticularly romantic and picturesque; like an eagle's nest, perched upon a lofty pinnacle, it seems to bid defiance to a menacing enemy, who, if it were defended with common bravery or skill, long might vainly gaze on its impenetrable fastnesses and wild retreats. The slaves, many of whom were distinguished in their native country by birth, fortune, or renown, no longer able to endure the ignominy of their yoke, or submission to the oppression of their wayward tyrants, justly rose up in rebellion against their masters, and at the peril of their lives shook off the galling chains of slavery. An innumerable host of these servile wretches, at the call of liberty, rallied round the standard of one Eunus, Antisthenes' slave, who, affecting to be inspired by divine authority revealed to him in dreams, created a degree of enthusiasm and desperation among his adherents which gave strength to his arms: he lead them from the craggy precipices of Triocola to such a series of astonishing successes against the Roman prætors, that the number of his followers rapidly augmented to an immense army; but their cause of freedom was soon weakened by the want of discipline in their ranks, and the injudicious excess of revengeful perpetrations; and the consular army, under Aquilius, struck the last fatal blow to their hopes of emancipation. The town was razed by the Romans; and the Saracens afterwards, attracted by the advantages of its position, built near its site the present town of Calata Bellota, which, in many sanguinary contests, they defended against the army of the Norman conqueror. They brought hither, in cases of danger, the booty of the island, and made it not only the depository of their richest spoil, but the safe retreat from the attacks of an overpowing enemy; but a bloody victory at length obliged them to acknowledge the dominion of Count Roger, and fly from the elevated rocks. From the spirit

of freedom that pervades the mountainous abode, or a conciousness of local security that inspires its inhabitants, more modern times have been celebrated for its contempt of public laws, and a participation of the same rebellious principles that animated its oppressed ancestors: indeed, until within very few years, it has been made the asylum of murderers, the rendezvous of banditti, and even to the present day, an occasional sanctuary for the perpetrators of capital crimes.

We soon came to the river* Calata'Bellota, so called because it takes its rise near the town of that name, and after wading some distance up its stony bed, crossed to the opposite bank, and ascended a hill thickly clothed with vineyards, to Ribera, a miserable looking town of about five thousand unhealthy looking inhabitants. After giving half an hour's repose to our animals, we continued through nearly four miles of hilly country, and descended into a wide-spreading, naked plain open to the sea, forded the Macassoli, (ancient Isburus), and about four miles farther to the north-east, came to the banks of the Platani: this is the Halycus of the ancients, which is confirmed by the interesting and remarkable notice taken of it by Diodorus, Plutarch, and Polybius, although some recent travellers have designated it as the Hypsa, and the theatre of Timoleon's victory over the Carthaginians; the latter of which, Captain Smith, in his Sicilian Memoirs, erroneously states; confounding with that occurrence, I suppose, the Carthaginian army that was landed to the westward of this river in the second Punic war†, under Himilco, for the purpose

* According to Ptolemy, the Socius of Antiquity.

† 212 B. C.

of aiding the Syracusans against Marcellus, which is recorded by Livy in the following terms:—"Per idem fere tempus et Himilco, qui Pachyni promontorium classem diu tenuerat, ad Heracleam, quam vocant Minoam, quinque et viginti millia peditum, tria equitum, duodecem elephantes exposuit."—Lib. xxiv. cap. 35.

Besides, in the time of Timoleon, the Carthaginians were in possession of Lilybæum, and had no occasion to risk an extensive fleet and armament like that on an exposed and open part of the coast.

The site of the ancient town of Minoa and Heraclea dignifies this stream which was situated on the western shore towards the mouth, first founded by the followers of Minos, and afterwards taken possession of by the Heraclidæ* when they came into Sicily, who gave it importance by building a large new city on the ruins of the old one†. The Carthaginians, through envy, or perhaps the dread of its attaining power, dismantled it; and it was finally ruined by Agathocles for rebelling against his authority‡. Cicero states, that the Romans again colonized it, and gave it advantages, but it soon sunk again into a deserted ruin; and very little more than the fragments can now be traced of the wall that surrounded the town. It was celebrated as a great depository of grain, and the conservatories they used may still be seen cut out of the rock near the shore, which proves the similar adopted custom of the present day to be of the oldest antiquity; and Polybius, I believe, mentions its notoriety as a grain store, from whence Lilybæum was supplied previous to the first Punic war.

* Herodotus, lib. viii. Pausanias, lib. iii.

† The Carthaginians assembled their fleet at Heraclea previous to the fatal battle of Ecnomos.

‡ Cicero 4, ad Verr.

The Platani is numbered amongst the most considerable rivers of Sicily, and although it is apparently in the summer but a trifling stream, from the number of tributary torrents that in the winter fall into its course, it swells to an alarming size during the rainy seasons, rushes with great impetuosity between its banks, and frequently becomes impassable for days. It is remarkable for having been made, by Timoleon, the boundary between the Grecian and the Carthaginian territories: it serves to record the days of that hero's greatness, and keeps alive the memory of his virtues, as well as the conviction of this impressive truth—that talent and skill, disinterestedly employed in the noble cause of general good, will never fail either in producing the most salutary fruits to mankind; or securing to the individual who so worthily exerts himself, the unqualified esteem both of God and man.

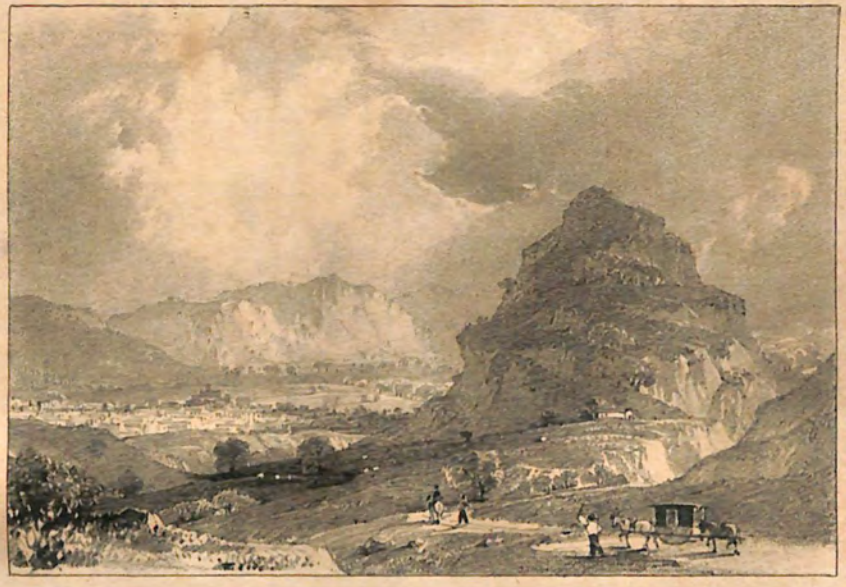
Intending to sojourn at Cattolica* for the night, we leisurely indulged in a meditative ramble along the side of the river, which is not without its attractions to the eye of a lover of landscape scenery: the beauties of grace and wildness pre-eminently adorn some of its windings, and here and there a mass of projecting rock, clothed above with the elegant foldings of vegetation, and a rippling current at its base, furnish a feature that would enrich the brightest imaginations of the most skilful artist. We crossed the stream nearly opposite Cattolica, which, after traversing about three miles of country, apparently better cultivated,

* The direct road from Sciacca to Girgenti is forty-two miles by the way of Monte Allegro, which may be effected in one day by setting out early, though it is usual to stop at Seculiana, which is thirty miles, and to go the remaining twelve the following day, being the more advisable plan, unless limited time urges the quicker progress.

and covered with almond and other fruit trees on the eminences, we entered just as the several churches were tolling the last peels of the Ave Maria. It stands on the side of a hill, open to an extensive plain, and distant sea on the south, and is shut in by a grim looking chain of mountains to the north; it is of very modern date, being founded by the lord of the soil at the commencement of the seventeenth century, though now a place of eight thousand inhabitants, chief town of the district, and gives title to a prince.

Our visit hence was for the purpose of examining the sulphur mines for which it is celebrated, consequently, at an early hour the following morning, we proceeded to them in company with an intelligent man belonging to the works, who was recommended to our notice: they lie about a mile from the town, and are composed of a variety of caverns containing immense quantities of sulphur in all its forms and combinations with other earths, but principally with lime, which is the prevailing stratum of the neighbourhood. On excavation it is immediately freed from the extraneous matter by being thrown into hot pans, having small holes at the bottom through which the sulphur runs perfectly pure into reservoirs below; it is then sent down in cakes to Seculiana for exportation.

The mineralogist will find ample source of gratification amongst the various productions of these caves: they furnish the richest specimens of apatite, selenite, strontianite, celestine, &c. &c., which occur in all their diversified colours as well as forms; massive, fibrous, stellated, and crystalized; white, grey, beautiful orange, yellow, red, and frequently of a delicate blue. Stalactitic forma-



The Town of Cattolica from the Neighbourhood of the Sulphur Mines.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY LIBRARY

tions also of the most beautiful and curious nature abound there, as well as enormous geodes* enclosing the most splendid crystalizations. Having a taste for the science, and a sufficient smattering to enable me to enjoy the pursuit, I dwelt with no small degree of delight on the examination of the many extremely interesting specimens that surrounded me.

Sicily is a country indescribably rich in its mineral productions; it is not of submarine volcanic formation, as innumerable travellers have suggested; the very form of its mountains contradicts the assertion; their pointed, rugged, uneven summits, and steep acclivities, all characteristics of the primitive rocks, attest its early existence; and I have no doubt, at some period or other, it united with the Calabrian coast; like it, producing all the gradations of mineralogical strata, from the most ancient granite rocks, to the alluvial soils of the most recent formation: little is known of the geology or mineralogy of either country. Since these sciences have engaged the attention of the present age in its rapid progress of human knowledge, no researches have been made thither, no scientific connoisseurs have explored the interior of their plains or mountains; which, I fear too, may long continue so, under the dominion of a listless, unenterprising government, whose narrow illiberal policy, not only refuses aid to other's efforts, but jealously interdicts the pursuit of any thing which tends to enlighten the world, or give freedom to the human mind.

I feel persuaded, both Calabria and Sicily would furnish an inexhaustible fund of interesting discovery in many

* These geodes sometimes occur nearly two feet in diameter, lined with perfect crystals of sulphur and strontian, exhibiting almost all the prismatic colours.

branches of natural science, if opened to the exertions of genius, and the speculations of enterprise *. Sicily, of old, was universally celebrated for its mines of lead, copper, silver, and gold; and the most ancient writers have recorded the variety of its precious stones, such as jaspers, calcedonies, agates, and lapis lazuli, &c., all of which are still found in many places without pains or cost, and several of them abounding in every form along its prolific shores, particularly jaspers, porphery, and agates, of the finest and richest species. Granite, of various sorts, is found in the south-eastern districts; and almost every where veins of the richest marbles, amongst which are excessively curious dendritic specimens that are employed in the more ornamental parts of inlaid marble work.

An infinity of metaliferous, as well as earthy minerals, in all their curious combinations and forms, occur more or less in the different divisions of the island, many of them hitherto unknown to the mineralogical world, consequently remain as yet undescribed. In a volcanic island volcanic productions are naturally expected to be numerous as well as the most choice; and the mighty caverns of Ætna fail not to furnish all the richest ingredients, and the most fantastic formations so peculiar to so curious, so wonderful a phenomenon; alum, nitre, vitriol, sulphur, hot mineral springs, springs of naphtha, asphaltum, and bitumen, with

* On my return to Naples in December, I had a long conversation on this subject with the Abbè Montecelli, whose learning and general scientific knowledge has acquired him the admiration and esteem of innumerable talented foreigners, during their visits there. I was flattered by his perfectly concurring with my opinions, and he lamented that so little was done to forward the pursuit of general science in his country; in uttering which, the shaking his head with an accompanying expressive shrug, I thought spoke volumes in the cause.

lavas of every gradation and sort, occur not only in the vicinity of the mountain, but in various and more distant regions of the island, which are influenced by the agency of subterranean fire. At a distance of fifty and sixty miles from the crater several parts of the country are strewed with stones of the most curious nature, and well worthy the consideration of the naturalist; they are decidedly volcanic, bearing evident marks of heat, and in some even of fusion, inclosing clusters of very small marine shells.

The fossils of Sicily are both abundant and curious; wherever the transition and flætz rocks occur, the most interesting organic remains, animal and vegetable, of the various species and genera, extinct as well as existing, are to be found in the greatest perfection. The summits of many of the highest mountains are covered with strata of calcareous matter, in which are imbeded extensive marine deposits, containing an assortment of the most entertaining specimens of testaceous fossils, whilst in other parts have been no less frequently discovered the petrified remains of birds, amphibious animals, and quadrupeds, amongst which latter, parts of the elephant and rhinoceros have at no very distant period been imposed on antiquarian curiosity as fossil remains of the giants that were fabulously said to have originally inhabited the island.

It is seven miles from Cattolica to Siculiana, through a sterile, hilly country, with a road over rocks of gypsum, and nothing to relieve the eye but a few wild shrubs and an occasional prospect of the sea. About two miles from Siculiana we entered the bed of the river Canna, where we joined a convoy of mules, laden with sulphur, from the mines; their company somewhat animated our solitary march, and after tracing the course of the stream some little distance, we crossed to the opposite bank, and continued with our clamorous companions to the town.

The strange ludicrous noises incessantly applied by Sicilian muleteers to their animals are altogether beyond the descriptive powers of the pen, and so novel to the ear of an English traveller, that it is quite impossible for him to restrain his risible faculties when journeying at their side.

Siculiana is a miserable looking dirty town, of about five thousand inhabitants, pleasantly situated at a short distance from the sea, on two hills, which are connected by a long street; the houses are built of gypsum in a very rude style of architecture, announcing neither regularity, cleanliness, nor comfort, and the only support to the town is the commerce in sulphur, the caricatore, or loading place for which is on the west bank at the mouth of the river Canna; however, there being no port, and the coast rocky, they are deprived of advantages that would otherwise accrue if the accommodation of a harbour enabled vessels to load so near the mines. In the present case a great proportion of the sulphur is carried to the port of Girgenti, either in boats from the Caricatore, or on mules direct from the mines.

The prospect from the lofty eminence on which the town stands is not unpleasing, it looks down on a fertile valley, covered with fruit trees, with the dilapidated castle Chiaramonte * to the west, and a wide expanse of sea to the south, whose waters the classic tourist will, doubtless, recognize as the once animated theatre of naval strife and contest between the fleets of Carthage, Rome, and the Sicilian republics. As I beheld the deserted watery waste before me, now untenanted even by the fisherman's fragile bark, I could not help reflecting on the melancholy contrast, and reverting to the more glorious days of antiquity, when the gorgeous fleet of Hanno was proudly striding

* This castle was erected during the turbulent times of the fourteenth century, by Federigo Chiaramonte, whose arms it still bears under a ruined part of the attic.

along the shores to meet the consular armament and the calamitous fate that awaited him off Ecnomos.

From Siculiana it is eight miles to the port of Girgenti, over a road and country very much similar to the one we traversed in the morning, which, though considered rather better in the estimation of Sicilian travellers, scarcely approaches our ideas of what is barely practicable for the passage of four-footed animals.

I must confess, during the whole of my journey through this island, which had been not only inhabited by a people celebrated as the Greeks were for their luxury and advancement in the arts and improvements of mankind, but so long in the possession of the Romans, whose roads in every other country they held dominion over, still constitute some of the most lasting monuments of their greatness, I could not help experiencing the strongest surprize at the total absence of the slightest trace or vestige of ancient roads; and the more so, from the rocky nature of the island, which we may rationally suppose would increase the difficulty of excavated passages being so entirely effaced by either the ravages of time or man. Yet it is very evident there must have existed commodious roads, since from the concurring testimonies of history, we know the ancients lead their cavalry, their war chariots, and their elephants through the island on different occasions; and that in the luxurious days of Agrigentum its opulent inhabitants kept splendid vehicles for their convenience *. Some of my readers will probably suggest the effects of volcanic action, in the neighbourhood of so formidable a feature as

* Diodorus says, that the opulent citizen Essenetus, returning victorious from the Olympic games, made a triumphal entry into the town, seated in a splendid chariot, and followed by three hundred others, all of which were drawn by four beautiful white horses.

that of Ætna: true, it might partially tend to such a change, but I do not think we have any thing on record that can warrant so general an hypothesis as the universal obliteration of all the ancient roads of communication by volcanic eruptions from Ætna; it is a subject that requires philosophical investigation, and I should be glad to hear the cause satisfactorily explained.

The port of Girgenti (called by the Girgentines Porto Nuovo) is comparatively of very modern date, being selected in the time of Charles I., of Naples, on account of the suitableness of its rocky stratum for the establishment of corn stores, which he caused to be excavated on an extensive scale, built over them large magazines, and constituted the place a caricatore, or place of export for corn *, which it has continued to be ever since, and now possesses a population of seven hundred inhabitants. A mole was constructed at the same period as a defence against the sands that washed in during southerly winds, and choked up the anchorage; however, in spite of all efforts, considerable deposits still continue to find their way inside, in consequence of which a large body of convicts is kept there for the purpose of clearing away the progressive accumulations of sand and cleansing the harbour.

The mole is a work of great solidity and compactness; it is built of large blocks taken from the ruined temples, though principally from the one of Jupiter Olympus. Convenient mooring-posts are fixed in different parts for the accomodation of vessels, and it is terminated by a battery and light-house, which, with another fort and light

* The ancient celebrated emporium was at the mouth of the river Akragus, now called the river Girgenti, but it is now entirely choked up, and not a fragment indicates the situation of the once tremendous mole, although the sailors say, in calm clear weather, they can see a ring under water attached to an immense block of stone.

on the cliff, constitute the nominal protection of the place; but such is the insignificant twinkling of the one, that vessels running in at night are more likely to confound, with their boasted pharos, some of the stars in the constellation of the Great Bear, which, brightly glittering above, seem more justly to contest the right of guidance; and so useless and inefficacious are the others, that they can in no way operate towards the defence of the place, excepting in the mere prevention of boats landing within the harbour. The port is very limited in point of space; however, the anchorage is good, and safe outside for all descriptions of vessels, and it is much frequented for the exportation of sulphur, grain, fruits, &c.

Nothing can exceed the beautiful effect of the present town of Girgenti from the port, or more particularly from the anchorage: it stands along the ridge of a rocky, and one of the highest hills on the coast, fronting the sea, with its cathedral and castle prominently towering above, and a line of architectural ruins just below, pitched on a variety of eminences in the midst of a luxuriant country, the prospect of which we enjoyed under every advantage as we advanced up the hill towards the tower; for a strong shower had just thrown a degree of freshness and brilliancy over the vegetable world; and the dying lights of evening, so suited to the gloomy character of antique dilapidations, lent a sort of melancholy beauty to the scene, and imparted a foretaste of the enjoyment we anticipated in the contemplation of the immortal parts of the once formidable city of Akragas.

It is about four miles and a half from the port to the town, by a good, though hilly road, lined with the aloe, the cactus, and occasional fruit trees. Night crept upon us before we entered the walls, and the chilly breezes of a

November evening, which the elevated position of Gergenti exposed us to, made us feel excessively glad to reach our place of abode, and indulge in the warmth even of a pan of charcoal. There are now two locandas here, which though of a rude nature, competition has caused to be improved, and in the one we frequented, of "Il Sole," we found what is most essential to the traveller, clean linen and moderately good beds, besides an anxious solicitude to please on the part of our host, which not only enhances the enjoyment of comfort when it is bestowed, but greatly compensates where it is not. The remainder of our evening was spent in tracing the fate and history of the prostrate city we were about to visit; and, in conjunction with the cicerone who was recommended for our employment, of marking out our plans for the following morning.

The ancient town owes its origin to a colony from the neighbouring city of Gela, who, under the direction of Pistillus, one hundred and fifty-three years after the building of Syracuse, and 578 B. C., commenced the foundation of their subsequently splendid republic. They were of Dorian extraction, and gave it the name of Akragas* (ΑΚΡΑΓΑΣ), from the appellation they had previously attached to the heights on which it is built, signifying its mountainous locality. By dint of those gigantic labours and vigorous exertions for which the Grecian colonists were so peculiarly celebrated, it rose rapidly into fame and prosperity, and soon attained the power and authority of an important republic. Its local amenity contributed largely to its flourishing condition; for the rich productions of the surrounding soil were eagerly sought, at immense prices, by the Carthaginian traders, which established such advantageous sources of wealth, that it became

* Ακρα Sommitas, and the Doric word ρας terræ.—*Polybius.*

one of the most opulent and luxurious cities in Sicily, with a population, in the time of Empedocles, of eight hundred thousand souls. It was surrounded by massive walls and fortifications, adorned with magnificent temples, equally celebrated for the beauty of their architecture as the magnitude of their dimensions, and its streets lined with the splendid palaces of affluent individuals, in competition with the pomp of royal habitations, which is, together with the characteristic *gourmandise* of the Agrigentines, recorded in the following words of Empedocles:—"The Agrigentines build as if they were never to die, and eat as if they had but another day to live*." They were notorious for their extraordinary hospitality, and displayed a degree of courtesy and liberality towards strangers that is unparalleled in history.

The military prowess of the state was frequently employed in contesting the palm of power with neighbouring republics, in which they manifested a nobleness and intrepidity worthy of a brave people.

It was variously ruled, and submitted alternately to monarchical, democratical, and tyrannical governments. Under the sway of a virtuous, disinterested magistracy, it exhibited the most delightful tranquillity and industry, and seems occasionally to have slumbered away years in the peaceful fruition of a voluptuous climate, a luxuriant soil, and the captivating country that surrounded, it oftentimes agitated by the rivalries and pretensions of republican administrations, until it ultimately fell under the usurpation

* Valerius Maximus relates, that an opulent citizen of Agrigentum, named Gellias, used to keep servants at the gates of the city, with express orders to invite to his house any strangers that might arrive unprovided with a lodging, and who he never allowed to depart without some generous gift.

of tyranny *, which exposed it to foreign broils as well as domestic misery.

The luxury and refinement of Akragas gave encouragement to genius and talent; the sun of science illuminated its walls, and the arts flourished: vases, paintings, and sculpture, of the most exquisite workmanship, everywhere adorned both public and private buildings; and poets, philosophers, and historians, rose up to ennoble the pages of its history; amongst whom are numbered the well-known names of Sophocles, Empedocles, and Senocrates. Dinolocus and Archinus also swell the list of its poets and philosophers; the first, a disciple of Epicarmus, wrote fourteen comedies in the Doric language, and the latter sixty tragedies.

Its power and prosperity not a little excited the jealousy of the Carthaginians, who, long intent on the subjugation of the island, now renewed their design, and determined on commencing their operations against that city. Consequently, in the year 409 B. C., they equipped an armament † proportioned to the magnitude of the undertaking, and gave the command to Himilco and Hannibal ‡, who laid desperate siege to the town. They closely invested it, and built terraces against the walls to facilitate the work of destruction: but they were bravely defended, and the repeated attempts of assault were as often frustrated. They §

* The cruel Phalaris was the first usurper of Akragas.

† Polybius and Livy state, composed of one hundred and twenty thousand men.

‡ Hannibal of Rhodes, son of Asdrubal, and grandson of Hamilcar, who was killed at Himaera.

§ Their priests or soothsayers always objected to this act of impiety, and to prevent it on this occasion, imputed the pestilence they experienced to the anger of the gods for their sacriligious work; in consequence of

opened the tombs, threw down the sepulchral monuments, and pursued every system of annihilation they could invent. The siege lasted eight months, and was accompanied with indescribable horrors, both on the part of the besiegers and the besieged; the former suffering under the most calamitous effects of pestilence, which carried off Hannibal, their most skilful commander; the latter afflicted by the ravages of famine, which at length reduced them to the galling necessity of surrendering their town to the fury of a merciless enemy *. All, who could, fled to Gela, and the remainder were slain, without distinction of age or sex, the town pillaged, and after serving as winter quarters for the army, was, by order of Himilco, ruined and destroyed.

Being the first siege the city had experienced, the richness of the plunder that fell into their hands is incalculable; the innumerable specimens of sculpture and painting were taken by Himilco to Carthage, together with the celebrated bull of Phalaris †, and every other valuable trophy that

which the tombs were repaired, and human sacrifices were made to Neptune and Saturn for the redemption of the crime.

* The opulent Gellias fled into the temple of Juno Lucina for protection, but hearing the enemy respected not even their gods, he set fire to the splendid fane and destroyed himself.

† A brazen bull, made and invented by Perillo, of Agrigentum, which, to gain favour in the eyes of the tyrant Phalaris, he presented to him as a new instrument of torture. It was of the most beautiful execution, and hollow inside, for the admission of human bodies, which he proposed to be burnt alive, by having a fire placed under the bull; small holes were made in the sides, through which the cries and groans of the tortured produced sounds like the bellowing of the animal. The tyrant admired the skill of the artist, who, he said, must possess the soul of a brute to imagine so horrible a machine, therefore made the first experiment on the poor inventor himself; and afterwards continued to exercise his cruelties on others, by which, according to Diodorus, he made himself so notorious for his tyranny. The bull was restored to Agrigentum by Scipio.

could give splendour to his successes in the eyes of the Carthaginian senate.

Such was the destruction of Akragas, that it no longer bore the semblance even of a city; it lay fifty years under its ruins, and would have remained deserted and forgotten, if Timoleon had not afterwards reassembled its old inhabitants, and sent thither a colony from Elos * to re-people its devastated abodes, and restore its fallen importance. Nearly a century and a half afforded ample time for comparative recovery from all its disasters, and towards the commencement of the first Punic war, it again ranked amongst the formidable cities of the south coast, but now engaged in the interests of the Carthaginians, who, learning that king Thero, of Syracuse, had deserted their cause, and formed an alliance with Rome, determined to make Akragas the rendezvous of their forces; consequently, in the third year of the war, sent an army of mercenaries, under Hannibal, to garrison and defend it, which they had no sooner effected, than the Romans, under the consuls Poshumius and Mamilius, vigorously attacked them, and after a tedious siege of seven months, during which both parties alternately suffered disadvantages, the Carthaginians were forced by famine to surrender †, and Hannibal, with the greater number of his troops, fled unperceived during the night, by crossing the Roman works, over faggots with which he filled up the entrenchments. The city was entered without resistance in the morning, given up to pillage, and made subject to the Roman empire, under the new appellation of Agrigentum; but destiny seemed to have marked her

* Elos, a city of Achaia, that had been swallowed up by the sea.

† This was the first important conquest the Romans gained over the Carthaginians in the first Punic war.

for a luckless fate; the ancient city now no longer assumed any pretensions; it became the sport of fortune, and fell a prey to the various contending parties during the first and second Punic wars.

In the year 212 B. C. the Carthaginians again took possession of it, by an army under Hanno, who landed at Heraclea, and maintained their position three years, in spite of Marcellus and the consul Lævinius; and even then the city was surrendered* only through the treachery of a disgraced Numidian officer. Lævinius gave it up to pillage and rapine, the results of which may be pretty well imagined. This completed the total reduction of Sicily, which then became the granary of Rome†.

At what period Agrigentum was entirely destroyed and deserted, I can find no precise authority to state; though we may safely, I think, infer, from concurring circumstances, that it must have received its annihilating blow during the incursions of the barbarous hordes of the dark ages; for, from the testimony of Cicero‡, we know it was standing in his time, that the temples were still venerated and frequented, and that the inhabitants were in sufficient number to rebel against, and successfully oppose, the rapacity of the wicked Verres.

It was also in existence in the year of our Saviour 825, when the Saracens entered it, who are then supposed to have founded the new town, on account of the strength of its position. It stands on the site of the ancient Camicus,

* See Livy's interesting account, lib. xxvi., and Polibius, lib. i.

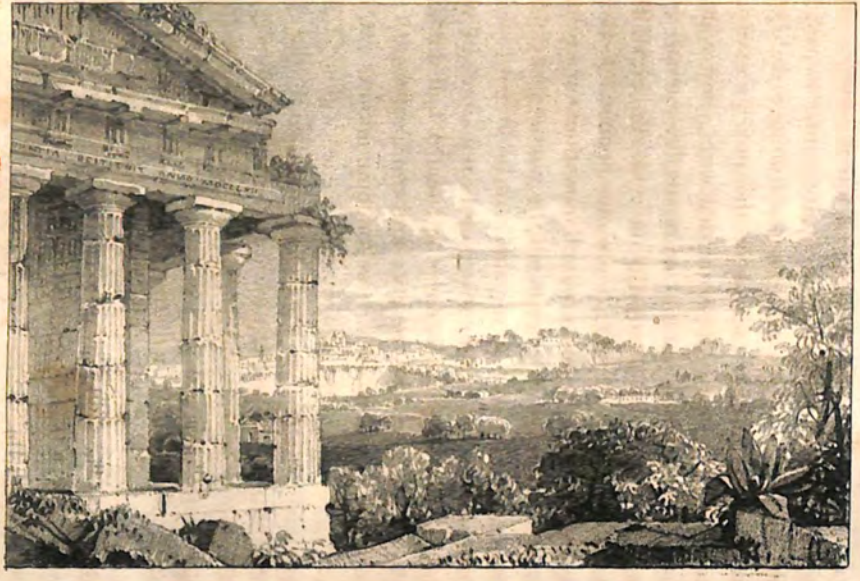
† Livy tells us, after this, under the prætorship of Titus Manlius, it was again colonized by Romans, and part of the old inhabitants, who had fled to different towns in the neighbourhood.

‡ Cicero ad Ver. lib. vi. and x.

the residence of king Cocalus, for whom Dædalus constructed a fortress to enclose the king's treasure, all of which was razed, long previous to the arrival of the Greeks, by the Cretans, who came to revenge the death of their king, Minos *.

In the year 1086, the Norman conquerors, under Count Roger, took the town from the Saracens, fortified it, and according to their accustomed laudable and characteristic exertions in the propagation of christian faith, founded the cathedral, and established the bishopric, which was confirmed under the popedom of Urban II. Different branches of the Chiaramonte family increased the place by erecting castles, founding convents, &c. in the fourteenth century; and it is now a town of between fourteen and fifteen thousand inhabitants, but excessively dirty and irregular, with narrow streets, almost impassable for carriages, although two or three of the nobility do keep them for the purpose of promenading up and down half a mile of road, expressly kept in repair for their limited indulgence.

* Minos came with an army in search of Dædalus, and under the pledge of hospitality, resided with Cocalus, and fell in love with his daughter, who, in concert with the father, scalded him to death whilst in the bath, at the same time uttering lamentations and calling the attendants to prove he had died a natural death whilst he was taking a hot bath. Cocalus afterwards persuaded the followers of Minos to remain in the island, und they accordingly founded a new town, which they called Minoa, in memory of their king.



VIEW OF GIRGENTI FROM THE TEMPLE OF CONCORD.

CHAPTER V.

On waking in the morning, I was naturally led to the window by that instinctive propensity which impels the generality of travellers on rising from a strange bed, to peep through every outlet in search of the novel scenes and objects they expect to be surrounded with; and what a spectacle!—what a voluptuous landscape lay unexpectedly spread before me! It broke at once like the creation of enchantment on my sight; for some moments I almost doubted the truth of what I saw, and more than once rubbed my eyes to assure myself it was not the momentary illusion of those aerial charms of the soul's imaginings which we are occasionally apt to indulge in; or the remaining impressions of some delicious dream from which I had suddenly awoke—but no! all was reality; and transported with the delectable enjoyment of it, I sat for some minutes stretching my gaze over the intoxicating scene, without being able to give utterance to the feelings it called forth. The window looked to the south towards the shore and upon the luxuriant vale beneath, embracing at one *coup d'œil* the whole theatre of that attractive country we had been with so much enthusiasm anticipating the contemplation of. The sun, too, was just rising in all the splendour of his morning brightness, spreading a blaze of golden light over the rich brown masses of ruin that crown the undulating eminences of Agrigentum's ancient site. To the east a tract of uncultivated, yet imposing heights contrast their mournful sterility with the reach of sunny country that borders on the west, enriched with luxuriant groves of olive, almond,

orange-trees, and vines; whilst, in the centre, the noble, the elegant fane of Concord elevates, with an air of commanding and impressive grandeur, its massive, yet tottering columns, like some tutelary deity of the surrounding scene.

In the front, the Mediterranean expanded its cerulean bosom as far as the eye could reach, enlivened by the blanched sails of a few fishing barks in the distance, that had availed themselves of the first break of day to toil upon its waters, besides a Turkish frigate and xebeck that were slowly gliding from the port, whither we were told they had been recruiting their stock of provisions and water. A thousand different emotions flitted across my heart as I viewed this lovely picture, and I felt at once the splendour, the majesty, and magnificence that prosperous Akragas must have boasted in her proudest days of greatness. I could not help thinking how much such a scene was calculated to compensate a refined mind for the many disappointments and mortifications incidental to a tour in this island. Whether we behold it for the charms of retrospection, and make it the telescope through which to trace the numberless interesting events that have distinguished its early history; whether we view it for the incomparable specimens of architectural antiquities that ennoble its heights; or whether the eye wanders over the endless varieties of its surface, where nature has shed all her graceful ornaments, and blended her most enchanting beauties; it must elicit equal admiration, and yield equal satisfaction and delight.

The sites of many ruined monuments and antique remains (as many of my readers will also have observed) exhibit but a mass of fragments altogether unintelligible and unpleasing to the eye, and owe their interest solely to the understanding, by aid of an intimate association with the past, their beauties being alone perceptible through the magni-

fying medium of the imagination; but here the visible attractions pre-eminently contest the palm of merit with those of the fancy and association, and claim an equal proportion of ardour from the man of taste and feeling.

At the same time let me not, by this description, encourage the traveller to believe he will find there parks, pleasure-grounds, fanciful plantations, or decorated villas and palaces. No, it is artless, uncivilized nature; and which, though rude and neglected, aided by a genial climate and the mellowed tints of a southern sky, combines all that is beautiful both of land and sea.

After breakfast we proceeded on donkeys to the ruins, accompanied by our obsequious cicerone. The road leads from the eastern gate, and after traversing an abrupt descent to the right, (from whence a beautiful prospect of the scene in front is worthy of remark), passes along a rocky declivity, interspersed with an infinity of sepulchral excavations. To the right lay the ancient town, bordered to the east and west by two branches of the river Akragas, which unite about a mile below, previous to falling into the sea. On a conic eminence to the eastward stood the temple of Ἀγνία, dedicated to chastity, as the name expresses, and was one of the earliest edifices of the colonists, who also frequently called it the temple of the virgins, because its altars were committed to the guardianship of a certain number of young girls: hence the appellation of a tower raised on its site during the tumults of the middle ages, which in more modern times was known by the name of the "Torre delle Pucelle;" but even that has disappeared, and scarcely more than a few isolated fragments of either remain to identify the spot.

In the south-east angle, near the wall which formed the defence on the sea side, are the beautiful ruins of a tem-

ple, dedicated to Juno Lucina. It rises, as it were, majestically out of a luxuriant grove of olive trees, which gracefully fold round its northern base, and stands on the summit of a rocky ridge looking towards the sea on the south. It is a Doric periptere of thirty-six fluted columns; namely, six in the fronts and thirteen at the sides, of those massive dimensions which characterise the earliest style of that order. It is built on an artificial basement, nearly twelve feet in height, composed of immense blocks of stone, which add considerably to the effects of its imposing grandeur, and exhibits an object of the most striking beauty and sublimity to the eye of an observer who views it from amongst the wooded shades beneath; a few rich verdant shrubs, growing round the dilapidated parts of the base, give an elegant finish to the picture, and a noble aloe, that had but recently flowered, and seemingly just divested of its blossomed beauty, elevated its lofty stem up the side of the wall, as if intent on peeping into the hallowed fane, and bidding a last adieu to the companion of its numbered days, ere it fell lifeless to the ground, from whence it had so proudly risen.

We unbridled our long-eared steeds, and turned them out to graze whilst we were occupied in the examination and measurement of the ruins. The area, or common plinth on which the pillars stand, is graduated by three steps from the basement, and is one hundred and eleven feet seven inches long, with a breadth of fifty-five feet six inches. The shafts taper away without any swell, from three feet six inches diameter under the ovolo, to four feet six inches at the base. The ovolo tapers, with a neat finish to the abacus, which is prominent and imposing, well suited to the ponderous magnitude of the entablature it supports. The north side alone is entire,

THE TEMPLE OF JUNO LUCINA GIRGENTI.

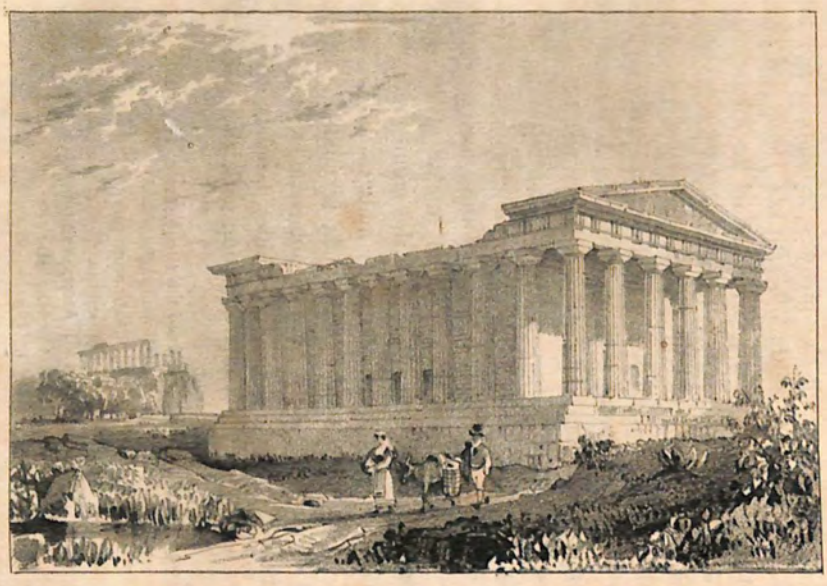
with the architrave and small proportion of the frieze; the remainder having fallen in a violent storm* from the north-west, in the year 1774, accompanied, it is supposed, with a slight shock of earthquake. Of all the divinities in the pagan world, there was none more solemnly, or more generally worshipped, than that of Juno, particularly in the character of Lucina, when she peculiarly presided over child-birth, and became an object of enthusiastic adoration amongst the ancients of her sex, who propitiated her favours by enriching her temples, and offering up a variety of sacrifices at her shrine. One of her most splendid temples was raised in Rome, A. U. C. 396, in which the Roman women consecrated one of the most exquisite and splendid statues of the goddess. The one also under our present consideration is reputed, according to the testimony of many ancient writers, to have been remarkable for the magnificence of its interior: it was decorated with the finest works of the most skilful artists, and Diodorus tells us, possessed a painting of Juno Lucina, that was esteemed the most incomparable production of the celebrated Zeuxis; who, to satisfy the ambition of the Agrigentine ladies, and do justice to his own talents, selected the finest parts from five of the most beautiful virgins of Agrigentum, who occasionally appeared naked before the artist, and enabled him to mould one of the most perfect models of the female form. The fact is confirmed by Pliny, as well as Aristotle: all was however destroyed, when the Carthaginians first besieged the town,

* The reader will naturally imagine, from the direction of the storm, why the southern columns, which were the least exposed, should have been the most affected; the reason of which is, that those parts of all the temples which are open to the sea are invariably the weakest and most dilapidated, from the corrosive action of the sea air.

by the famous Gellias, who, together with an immense number of women, depending on the protection of the gods and the respect for their altars, fled thither for security when the enemy entered the gates; but in vain did the altars flow with the blood of the sow and the ewe-lamb; in vain were the offerings* of dittany and poppies strewed before the shrine of the favourite divinity: the merciless soldiers, reckless of the holy fane, vowed indiscriminate vengeance; which, on being made known, the opulent citizen set fire to the building, and perished, with all its contents, in the flames.

From the temple of Juno Lucina, the wall that constituted the southern boundary of the city runs all along the precipice towards the west: it is formed out of the live rock by excavating all the stone within to a level with the depth of the wall, and must have been originally of extraordinary solidity: small recesses of different forms and sizes are cut in the inner side, suggested by some travellers to have been coffins; but we know it was contrary to the custom to inter within the city, therefore it becomes quite a matter of doubt as to the use they were appropriated by the ancients. Were they intended as the depositories of dedicatory urns to public characters and great men, which, in their original finished state, with appropriate inscriptions, would not only have proved ornamental, but useful in keeping alive the memory of distinguished personages, and thereby influencing existing generations by the honours that were paid to the merits of departed genius and virtue; or were they receptacles for popular idols and tutelary deities, such as we see in

* Sacrifices and offerings usually made to conciliate the favours of the goddess.



The Temple of Concord Girgenti.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY LIBRARY

the more modern days of paganism in Italy, Spain, and Portugal?

The next temple is that chaste and beautiful one, usually known by the name of Concord*: it stands in a similar position to the one described, being elevated in a most commanding view, on the borders of the rock nobly towering over all the picturesque objects that lie within its precincts: like the other, it is a Doric periptere of thirty-six fluted columns, with six in the fronts, and entire in all its parts, with the exception of a few stones in the cornice of the pediments; but evidently of later date than that of Juno, from the exquisite and superior style in which all its component parts are finished. It is nearly of the same proportions, though somewhat larger, being one hundred and twenty feet in length, and fifty-nine feet nine inches in breadth. The intercolumniations are five feet nine inches, with a diameter of three feet six inches under the ovolo, and four feet ten inches at the base. The entablature is ponderous, and the cornice more than usually projecting, which probably adds to the dignified effect of its massiveness. The cella is standing, with a portal in the front between two pillars and two pilasters, and six small arched doors at the sides, besides a staircase to the right and left, communicating with the roof. At

* It received this appellation from the circumstance of a marble table found somewhere near it to the following effect:—

Concordiæ Agrigentinorum sacrum,
Respublica Libitanorum,
Dedicantibus, M. Atterio candido
Procos: et L. Cornelio Mar
Cello. Q. P R. P R.

Which I consider, however, in due submission to antiquarian science, to be no authority: for what can a Roman inscription have to do with a temple that must have been built long ere Rome was known to Akragas.

the east end there is an area or pronaos* attached to the building, composed of large blocks of stone, with a flight of steps leading up from the side, which commands as fine and interesting a subject for the pencil as the draughtsman can possibly desire or imagine. Supposing the spectator to be seated on the wall, with his back to the sea, he will have immediately on his left, in the front ground, the beautiful façade of the temple; beyond the outer pillars of which the modern town appears ranged along the heights in the distance, with the Dominican convent and gardens on a hill to the right of it; the church of San Nicholo, and Franciscan convent below, picturesquely varied with groups of olive and almond trees, that time has gracefully raised over the ruined habitations, and once animated scene of the Grecian city.

Altogether this ancient edifice, from its remarkable site, high state of preservation, and architectural beauty, is one of the most irresistibly striking objects I ever saw: highly wrought in its ponderous and symmetrical individualities, it is at once graceful, elegant, energetic, and austere; and exhibits a fine specimen of the wonderful durability of these monuments of Grecian art.

In 1762, its dilapidated parts were strengthened and repaired by Ferdinand IV., which, notwithstanding the merit it claims, is with execrably bad taste commemorated by a staring inscription to that effect, on a white ground, at the lower part of the architrave; an undeniable eye-sore to the venerable character of the edifice.

* Many people are apt to confound the pronaos with the portico, which I consider perfectly distinct; the former being, as the Greek word expresses it, a space merely in front of the temple, whilst the latter forms a part of it, and is what the Greeks called στοα, hence the appellation Stoics, because the followers of Zeno held their controversial meetings in porticos.

A little more than a quarter of a mile, along the same line of wall, stood the temple of Hercules, where the classical reader will easily recognise the position, from whence the plundering soldiers of Temarchides * were deservedly precipitated.

One melancholy looking shaft alone is standing, like a sentinel placed by antiquity to watch over the prostrate pile of ruins, all of which seem to have fallen within the area of the edifice, forming a perfectly distinct heap. Many of the broken columns I found to measure seven feet in diameter. It was the largest finished temple of the city †, and held in the most sacred respect by the Agrigentines, who proved their veneration by the bravery with which they defended it against the violators of its altars. Its value was enhanced by the possession of two of the richest works of art the age could produce, namely, a superlatively executed bronze statue of Hercules, celebrated by Cicero, who states such was the enthusiastic adoration and fondness for this image, that the lower part of the face was (like the great toe of St. Peter) almost worn away by the osculatory rites of the pagan worshippers. The other was a painting by Zeuxis of the young Hercules, represented in the act of strangling the serpents in his cradle, with Alcmena and Amphitrion, who, just entering the apartment, stand terrified and aghast at the miraculous powers of the infant boy ‡. Pliny, describing the exquisite beauty of

* A band of mercenary troops, commanded by Temarchides, was sent by the rapacious Verres to plunder the temple of its riches, and particularly of the valuable statue of the god, but the guards spread the alarm amongst the citizens, who repaired to the place, and after a desperate conflict succeeded in driving out the sacrilegious depredators, many of whom were thrown down the cliffs by the exasperated multitude.

† The one of Jupiter Olympus never having been completed.

‡ The celebrated statue alluded to in the splendid fane of St. Peter's at Rome, is of bronze, an ancient image of some pagan deity converted

this work, mentions, that the artist held it in such invaluable estimation, that he could not affix a price to his *chef d'œuvre*, therefore presented it to the Agrigentines for the decoration of their temple. Both works were sent by Himilco to Carthage, but restored again by Scipio after the destruction of that city. What was their final destiny I could not learn, though I have no doubt they became the ultimate property of the Roman conquerors.

The notice of already two inestimable productions of one of the renowned painters of antiquity, induces me to digress a little from my subject, for the purpose of expressing my astonishment at the erroneous opinion which, I think, seems generally to prevail in modern days with regard to the state of painting amongst the ancients, it being considered as having by no means attained the same height of perfection as the sister art of sculpture. My own impression is, that in every refined country the art of painting has always kept pace with that of sculpture, and that the perishable nature of the materials which the former employs, has alone prevented its specimens being handed down to us like those of the latter. Paintings suffer material injury from a variety of circumstances, independent of the violence of man; from corrosive concretions, which, by neglect, form upon the surface; from decay of the substance on which the painting lies, &c.—whilst sculptural subjects have not only, from the durability of the marble of which they are composed, withstood the test of time, but after being hurled from their pedestals in the destructive

into a modern apostle for the worship of Roman Catholic idolaters; and such is the religious warmth it excites in adorers, that the great toe (which is the part peculiarly selected by the faithful for the expression of their zeal), has actually been kissed away, replaced, and again almost reduced to annihilation.

moments of local revolutions, and having laid in a state of mutilation for centuries under ground, have been again resuscitated, put together, restored to their almost pristine beauty, and handed down through a succession of ages of refinement for the admiration and criticism of our modern taste*.

We can judge of painting alone by the description and opinions of ancient writers, whose unqualified eulogies of many individual productions of the art give us every reason to think favourably of the powers of ancient masters. We learn, too, from the concurring testimony of historians, that men of taste and letters every where sought and encouraged the works of one art as well as the other. The Carthaginian generals in their Sicilian conquests were equally avid in the attainment of paintings and of sculpture, and of which they bore away innumerable highly appreciated specimens to enrich the galleries of their proud city.

Herodotus, Pausanias, and Plutarch tell us that the conquerors of Greece eagerly seized and carried away all the beautiful *chefs d'œuvre* of the pencil that adorned the public buildings, and that Xerxes entirely despoiled the beautiful temples of their paintings, which he sent as a present to his uncle Artabanes. The latter author also states, that some of the most curious and exquisite works of that art

* The paintings of Pompeii and Herculaneum are the only extant productions of the ancients, and although they exhibit a wonderful degree of genius in the spiritedness of the composition, the beauty of colouring, and grace and elegance of their style, I do not consider them the standard by which we ought to judge of the state of the then art, any more than posterity ought to form their opinions of the productions of West, Turner, Wilkie, and Lawrence, from the works of house painters, which might be found on the interior walls of London houses, supposing the town to have undergone the same revolution as that of Pompeii.

which hung round the walls of the temple of Minerva at Platæa, were still in existence in his time.

The next temple that comes under our notice is the one of Jupiter Olympus, whose site and dimensions are immediately recognised from the descriptions of Cicero and Diodorus; it was separated only by a street from the one of Hercules, and is reputed to have been in point of architectural magnitude the most stupendous fane of the heathen world. According to the authority of Polybius and Diodorus, the Carthaginian war suspended the completion of the interior, and it suffered in process of time a similar fate to almost all the others, namely, of being levelled with the earth, where it now lies in broken and unconnected masses, sufficiently perfect, however, in the detail to admit of exact measurement*.

It was a hypæthros, of fourteen columns at the sides and seven at the ends, measuring three hundred and sixty-four English feet long, and one hundred and seventy-five broad on the upper area or basement of the pillars. The intercolumniations were walled up, contrary to any heretofore known style, and the interior surfaces of the columns were squared off with a flat level, unquestionably, I think, intended for the placement of those colossal figures of giants that have been found at various periods, and may have rested on high pedestals, supporting a heavy ornamented entablature, to commemorate the subjugation of the giants

* Diameter of columns, thirteen feet; length of shaft, fifty-five feet; depth of ovolo, three feet; ditto of abacus, two feet and a half; architrave, eleven feet; frieze, twelve feet; cornice, four feet ten inches; pediment, twenty-five feet; flutings of pillars, two feet wide. The capitals are divided into quarter pieces, uniting the ovolo and abacus, with deep intaglios in the form of a horse-shoe, for the purpose of introducing ropes to raise them into their places.

by the heathen god of Olympus, to whom the temple was most solemnly dedicated, as the Persians * of Pausanias portico, which, but a few years before, had been invented to celebrate the glorious victory of Platæa. I do not know how far my antiquarian readers will bear me out in such an opinion, particularly when opposed to that of the ingenious and scientific Cockerell; at the same time I feel such an hypothesis strongly supported by a variety of facts; namely, the flatness and unfinished state of the backs as well as the heads of the figures, which clearly establish their having stood against a flat surface, and borne a superincumbent body: independent of which, the more convincing proof adduced by a Latin poem, composed to record the fall of the last standing remains † of the edifice in 1401, which has been handed down by the Sicilian annalists to the following effect:

Quæ veteris una tibi monumenta decoris
Magnorum testes operum gazæque potentis,
Virtutumque fuere Acragæ gens clara tuarum
Reliquiæ cecidere, et terno Athlante revulso
Sublimes miseram muri oppetiere ruinam,
Nunc ubi sunt Siculis regno de Principe signa
Quæ referas? Oppressa jacent fœdisque sepulta
Ruderibus, quorum spoliis sæ nona decembris
Unus a mille, et centum quater induit anni
Lux inimica, tua clade, et squallore triumphans.

Diodorus ‡ informs us the tympanum of the eastern pe-

* Persians are male figures supporting heavy entablatures, and were invented to keep alive the memory of the great victory gained by Pausanias over the Persians, who were for the first time lead in slavery to Athens: they are generally confounded with Caryatides or Carians, which are confined to female figures, supporting also a heavy entablature, to commemorate the total conquest of the Carians, and the infamy of their wives, who were dragged into captivity by the Athenians.

† Part of the wall, including three pillars and three giants.

‡ Lib. xiii., chap. 24.

diment was ornamented with a sculptural group, representing the battle of the giants, the grandiosity and elegance of which he describes as being unequalled; and in the western pediment a beautifully expressed subject of the siege of Troy.

The scene now displayed, where once this magnificent fabric raised its ponderous walls, affords a melancholy memento of the fame and greatness of Akragas; and the magnitude of its now immoveable fragments excite the admiration and wonder of the traveller as he wanders through the dilapidated waste. However, time has mitigated the appalling appearance of the ruin by the graceful distribution of a variety of shrubs and trees, whose spicy fragrance and luxuriant fruits now fall where the blood of victims would have flowed, and whose folding branches spread their umbrageous foliage over the intended shrine of the Olympic deity.

A few almond and fig trees, with a fine pistachio, contrast their mottled verdure with the mellow browned heaps they shade; and the place is rendered inexpressibly interesting in the early part of the year by a prodigious number of nightingales, which, from some unaccountable attachment, more particularly frequent this spot, selecting some shaded branch from whence to pour forth the melancholy yet pleasing expression of their gurgling song. The people of Girgenti boast the possession of these lovely enchanters, and are oftentimes led thither for the purpose of indulging in the ravishing sweetness of their evening harmony.

Just as we were about to take our departure from this lovely scene, a ludicrous occurrence interrupted for a few minutes the agreeable train of thought that had been awakened by the hallowed spot we were quitting, as well as the happiness of our cicerone, who, being the proprietor

of the donkeys we rode, had, on alighting, with sagacious caution, fixed the animals by their bridles to a weighty block of stone; but they, from some natural instinct, or a previous knowledge of the locality, conscious of the abundant store the place furnished of their favourite food, broke from their limited tether in quest of the delicious pasture: consequently, on our return, we beheld, to the inexpressible horror of the guide, the broken bridles on the ground, without the slightest signs of the beasts they had so recently restrained; nor could we, after diligent search, discover the most distant traces of them, excepting the suspicion that they were already in the service of another master; having crossed the path of a sailor, who, on inquiry, intimated he had seen a man driving two donkeys towards the port, at the hearing of which poor Giovanni, with repeated signs of the cross, vociferatingly hailed the blessed virgin, and invoked the protection of Saint Antonio*, both of whom his superstitious zeal afterwards convinced him had graciously listened to his appeal; for on retracing our steps through the ruins, we espied the long-eared grazers tranquilly feasting on some thistles, obscured from our previous search by a triglyph and capital, between which they were snugly impaled; when he joyfully exclaimed, "Guarda un poco signore, quanto è buona la Santa Madonna anche il nostro Sant Antonio." Near this temple stood the sea gate, parts of which still remain to mark the spot. In the garden of the convent of San Nicholo massy remains may be seen of some ancient architectural monuments, now baptized by the name of Cicero's Palace. We know Cicero performed the office of prætor here, and that he inhabited a large building called the Prætorian Palace, but we have no authority to affix its exact position. Near

* The patron saint of horses, asses, and mules.

here also stood the theatre, which Jiulio Frontino, an Italian author, states to have been of great height and splendour. To the south, without the town, and just below the temple of Hercules, still stands, in melancholy solitude, the celebrated tomb of Theron, which escaped the disastrous demolition of the sepulchres by the army of Himilco, through an artifice of the Carthaginian soothsayers, who looked with evil bodings on such sacrilegeous outrage. It had been just struck with lightning, which they declared was an ominous signal of heaven, and held it impious to touch that which was evidently marked by the gods, which alone withheld the revengeful sword of the destroyers, and preserved this remaining monument of the dead. Some authors have doubted its identity, considering it one of those sepulchral monuments which the Agrigentines were accustomed to raise over their fallen coursers, or a favourite steed; however, the authority of Polybius not only proves the existence of such a tomb, but also identifies its site, when he states, "The tomb of Theron, situated opposite the temple of Hercules, was struck by lightning:" independent of which, Diodorus, in his second book, says, "on account of the justice, modesty, and clemency with which Theron, during sixteen years, governed the state, monuments were erected at his death, and divine honours established to commemorate his merits."

The edifice is twenty-nine feet and a half high, composed of two stories, the lower one of pyramidal form, thirteen feet in diameter at the base, and nine at the top, supporting a second, decorated with Ionic pilasters at the corners, and a window in the centre. There was, however, no attic, as has been remarked by some travellers, for part of the entablature which crowned the building still remains with its triglyphs. Within there is a vault,

THE TEMPLE OF CONCORD.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

ground floor, and chamber in the Ionic story, with a small stair of communication; and I have no doubt, in its unimpaired and perfect state, with appropriate ornaments and inscriptions, it may have been a splendid monumental structure; but the eye is too apt to judge of things as they are; and buildings composed of dead walls (very different to columnar edifices), when by dilapidation they are divested of their ornamental accessories, lose a great proportion of their interest, as well as beauty, for which reason many visitors have inconsiderately passed unmerited condemnation on the object in question.

Its situation is classically picturesque, being enshrined as it were in a solitary sanctuary devoted to itself alone, with a grove of trees in the front, under whose gracefully bending boughs the spectator discovers in the distance the elegant temple of Concord towering over the ruined walls of the precipice; and beyond it, in beautiful perspective, the tottering shafts of Juno Lucina, with a rich garden of olives spreading beneath, to give a softened effect to this fascinating landscape of classical history.

As I sat upon the fragment of a capital sketching the lovely picture before me, I indulged in the day dreams of imagination, associating myself with the city as it was, and the distinguished ancients that once animated its crowded streets and peopled its gorgeous palaces; for the fancy delights in roving through the fields of distant time, and contemplating the records of ages that are gone; and here what an exhaustless source of intellectual amusement! what an expanse for the exercise of rapturous thought!

A quarter of a mile to the westward of the temple of Jupiter Olympus stood the one of Æsculapius*, so re-

* Two Doric columns, inserted in the wall of a modern edifice to the southward of the temple of Concord towards the port, have been desig-

nowned in days of antiquity for the possession of the incomparable statue of Apollo, which is also known to have visited Carthage after the siege, and constituted the boast and glory of that city until Scipio redeemed the treasure, and nobly restored it to the Agrigentine shrine. It was the work of Miro, whose name Cicero says was inscribed in silver on its side. The minute description of Polybius* enables us to identify the site of this temple, which he says stood at the west end of the town looking towards Heraclea. Nothing, however, now remains but mutilated shafts, a few fragments of columns, &c., which lie scattered in a vineyard that occupies the site, surrounded by a tuft of carob trees.

Many other temples existed in various parts of the town, particularly the one of Minerva (also recorded by Polybius), to the westward of these temples, on a hill, which was by the citizens of Akragas denominated Αθηναιος λοφος, but nothing remains to afford satisfactory proof of their indentity; and what I have already described are sufficient to attest the beauty of ancient architecture, as well as the luxury and power of the Agrigentines. They are all of the Doric order, and built of a soft porous stone, which was excavated from the quarries to the westward of the Franciscan convent, and constitutes the rocky stratum of the surrounding country. It is formed from a concrete agglutination of marine substances, enclosing beautiful specimens of testaceous fossils, particularly of the Cytheræa and Venus species, some of which are astonishingly remarkable for their size, high

nated as the remains of the temple of Æsculapius, but evidently without the slightest foundation; for neither the character of the pillars, nor the situation, accord with the description of Polybius.

† Polybius, book i.

state of perfection, and the wonderful preservation of their natural colour.

Neither cement or mortar hold together these enormous fabrics; they depend alone, for their strength and unity, on the ponderous immoveable masses of which they are formed; and had it not been for the destructive revolutions of man, aided by the effect of terrestrial convulsions, even the sweeping scythe of time would have handed them down to us the perfect and most durable masterpieces of human art*.

Though we are not acquainted with the dates of their erection, we know that the principal ones, as well as the vivarium, the acqueducts, and other colossal works, with which Akragas was adorned, were built after the defeat of the Carthaginians, at Himera, in the year before Christ 479, by Gelo and Theron, who divided the prisoners amongst the friendly powers, to be employed in public works for the use and ornament of their cities.

The vivarium lay to the west of the temples, just without the walls, and, according to Diodorus and Athenæus, constituted one of the most facinating objects, as well as the most beautiful terminations to the magnificent city of Akragas, that can well be imagined: the former states it to have been seven stadia in circumference, and twenty cubits deep, supplied with water by springs and streams that were led into it from the north: an abundance of swans and wild fowl inhabited the surface, and it supplied every variety of fish† for the luxurious repasts of the rich. It was excavated by the Carthaginian captives, and con-

* Cicero, lib. vi.

† We have nothing on record, I believe, to inform us whether salt water fish formed part of the contents of this conservatory, receiving new form and flavour as in the Guernsey vivarium of the present day.—*Vide M'Culloch's Treatise on the subject.*

secrated by the citizens to the memory of Gelon, the friend and liberator of Sicily.

It began to decay in the time of Diodorus, and now the form alone is apparent; and the watery element has given place to a captivating exhibition of luxuriant vegetation.

The remains of tombs the traveller will observe to abound in all those parts that formed the suburbs of the city, though particularly beyond the eastern branch of the river, in that part called Neapolis, and afterwards, by the Latins, the vale of the dead; some were square, others round at the top, with niches which contained vases and urns, the votive offerings of friends and relatives. Many of these vases have been recently excavated, and may be purchased from the owners; though I ought to avert those of my readers who travel hence, of the attempts frequently made to impose *admirable* imitations of modern manufacture on the unskilled visitor: the ancient ones are infinitely lighter, and will resist the effects of strong acids, with which others become immediately corroded, and are thus soon recognised. There are still visible some relics of the enormous aqueducts which also formed part of the labours of the unfortunate Carthaginians, and received the appellation of Phæaces, from their projector Phæax. They supplied the wells and fountains of the city with the pure streams from the hills, and their remains are to this day called Phæaci by the inhabitants: they are cut out of the solid rock, generally speaking, three feet wide, and five feet deep, intersecting the town by a variety of ramifications.

Many of the fountains of Girgenti, as well as in innumerable other parts of Sicily, produce on their surface a quantity of fine soft oil which the natives burn in lamps, and sometimes apply medicinally: Pliny peculiarly cele-

celebrates the production of it here. It is nothing but the more subtile parts of certain bituminous matters sublimed by the action of subterranean fires, which, being condensed into a liquor by the cold of caverns through which they force themselves, unite with aqueous particles, and make their way through clefts and fissures to the surface of the earth, where they have received the generic terms of naphtha and petroleum *, according to their proportionate state of viscidity, fluidity, and colour. This oil is in some parts of Sicily scented and applied to the hair; in others taken internally, being an excellent antispasmodic and sudorific.

The only ruin, I believe, I have omitted to describe is the remains of a Roman fountain, which lies between the temple and the town. The front is perfect, with the spout and abreuvoir; and a square marble bas-relief in the upper right corner, with the period of erection below, marked anno 161. Models of it, as also of the temples, are beautifully executed in a soft stone †, at a moderate price, by a modern artist. Dilapidated masses of large fabrics are observable in various parts of the country that embraced the ancient town, but none sufficiently known to be recognised as specified edifices; though one site is ascribed to the palace of Gellias, and another to the palace of Cicero and Verres, who successively performed the office of prætor here.

After passing the greater part of the day amongst the ruins, we bent our steps towards the town, crossing to the

* I have seen quantities of this oil in the states of Modena and Tuscany, where there are abundant fountains of it. It is also taken in great profusion off the sea under Mount Vesuvius after stormy weather, when it is supposed the agitated waters wash it out of the fissures.

† It is a variety of alabaster, scientifically denominated compact gypsum, which abounds near Girgenti.

heights of Camicus, through that gardened plain that once formed the Grecian vivarium; it was the season for gathering the fruits of the Indian fig or prickly pear, which abounds almost in all parts of Sicily, and particularly around Girgenti; it is the *cactus opuntia* of Linnæus, the leaves (or rather divisions as they are more properly termed) are thick, oval, fleshy, covered with spines, and upwards of a foot in length, growing one out of the other, and swelling at the joints as they increase in age, until the whole of the lower part forms a sort of cylindric trunk; the flowers are reddish yellow, or sometimes crimson, emanating from the borders of the divisions, and the fruit like a large fig of a deep red colour, enclosing a succulent pulp, which, although I think very insipid, seems to constitute a favourite food of the lower orders, being considered both nutritious and salubrious. The plant propagates with facility and astonishing rapidity, from mere single divisions stuck in the earth; hedge-rows are generally formed of them throughout the island, and they in a short time become impenetrable barriers, bidding defiance to man or beast. I have seen them ten and fifteen feet high, which, when covered with the fruit or blossom, present a curious and interesting appearance; the plant is hardy, and will vegetate, and even flourish out of old walls and stony ground, possessing the peculiar quality of forcing its roots into the minutest fissures of rocks, and pulverizing the hardened stratum into a species of soil; hence it is rendered inestimable in the cultivation of rocky or lava countries, which being planted a few years with it become capable of culture.

A bronze-faced, athletic looking dame, of about forty, hailed us as we passed, with an offer of some of the fruit, which formed the burthen of a wretched looking horse she was leading. The poor beast exhibited but a sorry speci-

men of the once celebrated race of Akragas*, and from its age, as well as condition, seemed to require the interference of Mr. Martin's philozoonic benevolence; though grateful for her proffered generosity, I could not help expressing a few words of reproach for her want of sympathy towards the brute, at the same time thinking how time and circumstances had changed the fate of the equestrian tribe since their golden days in the ancient city, where, in their declining years, they were fostered by the kindly care of their masters, and not unfrequently, if favourites, interred with the sepulchral pomp of human beings.

The contents of modern Girgenti offer very little to the eye of the curious. The cathedral, as I before observed, was founded by Count Roger, the Norman, in the year 1089, after the expulsion of the Saracens; and from a rude specimen of the Norman style has become, by patched up repairs at various periods, an inconsistent, unintelligible jumble of architectural points, forming so discordant an ensemble as to preclude it being classified with any known order or style. The interior is, from the peculiar form, remarkable for its accoustic effects, which caused a source of diversion to the wags of earlier days in the following way. The slightest whisper is borne with perfect distinctness from the great western door, where once stood a confessional, to the cornice behind the high altar (a dis-

* The ancient race of Akragas was celebrated for their beauty, fleetness, and strength, and never failed to display their superiority as competitors in the course; besides the records of historians, their renown is mentioned by Virgil and Silius Italicus, in the following lines:—

Arduus inde Acragas ostentat maxima longe
Mœnia magnanimum quondam generator equorum.—*Third Æneid.*

Altor equorum
Mille rapit turmam atque himnitibus æra flammat,
Pulverem volvens Acragas ad inania nubem.—*Silius, lib. xiv.*

tance of two hundred and fifty feet); the consequence of which was, all communications with the confessor were transferred to that point, and listened to by young men who repaired thither for that purpose, until a gentleman, on one occasion, had his curiosity gratified by the avowal of his own wife's infidelity, which caused the circumstance to be generally known, and the consequent removal of the confessional.

The walls of this sombre looking edifice are ornamented with numerous failures of the brush, excepting a tolerable good representation of the Virgin, falsely attributed to Guido; the beautified expression of that inimitable artist is wanting, neither does it possess his softness of touch or delicacy of colouring.

The tabernacle encloses a silver sarcophagus, where are enshrined the bones of the patron saints, which, together with other relics, are exposed on the days of their particular fêtes for the worship of zealous devotees.

The greatest and most worthy object of admiration in this church is an ancient sarcophagus of white marble, which was discovered amongst the ruins of the ancient city, and converted into the baptismal font of the modern cathedral. I know there are many conscientious persons, persevering sticklers in favour of certain religious observances, strongly object to the transformation of heathen works of art, particularly when ornamented with pagan subjects, into the ritual purposes of a christian temple: but, I positively confess, as no evils resulting from such practice have ever come within the sphere of my observation or knowledge, and as long as the pagan subjects, constituting the ornaments of the works in question, shall not be associated with the ceremonies prescribed by the holy religion of Christ, I think it can be productive of

no possible injury to the cause of christianity, therefore ought not only to be tolerated but encouraged, since we are indebted to the practice for the preservation of some of the most inestimable productions of antiquity.

The four sides of the sarcophagus are ornamented with incomparably fine specimens of sculpture, executed in mezzo relievo, which, though not of such exquisite finish as some in the Vatican and Medicean galleries, nevertheless rank amongst the most excellent and spirited works of ancient art that time has preserved to us. The subject has proved an inexhaustible source of contention amongst the cognoscenti and antiquarians who have inspected it: some have represented it to be the death of Phintias, the last tyrant of Agrigentum; but being expelled the throne for his intollerable oppression and blood-thirsty cruelties, he died in exile at Carthage; consequently it appears very improbable that a funereal monument of such magnificence should have been erected to the memory of so detested an oppressor: some style it the death of Adonis, but the chariot is irrelevant to the subject of his history, and totally destroys the idea, as much as the boar hunt does the suggestion which others have ventured to make of its illustrating the Trojan hero's fate under the wheels of Achilles' car.

Again, the story of Phædra and Hippolytus is supposed by many, with much more justice and probability, to form the subject of these beautiful reliefs, and which, after minute examination, I have no hesitation in professing to be my own decided opinion; the melancholy tale seems plainly told; little or no exercise of the imagination is required to call to the mind of the spectator the interesting and pathetic description that has flowed from the polished pen of Euripides: the details follow in regular succession

round the monument, according to the suite of events that characterise the sublime tragedy of the Grecian dramatist.

The first or front side presents a groupe of nine figures, executed with an incomparable degree of boldness and expression; one, more perfect, more striking, and evidently the hero of the subject, stands out with a greater relief than the rest, rather bordering on the alto than the mezzo, exhibiting a personification of that intellectual dignity and physical beauty which so peculiarly marked the object of Phædra's incestuous attachment. He is listening with manifest indignation to an old woman, who, in a supplicating attitude at his feet, cannot be mistaken for the confidential attendant of Phædra, communicating the infamous proposals of his guilty stepmother. The next side to the right contains the figure of a distinguished female in a fit of despair, surrounded and supported by her companions, unquestionably the guilty daughter of Minos, betokening her grief and vexation at the cold refusal of the virtuous Hippolytus; the attitudes are elegant, easy, and natural; the forms exquisitely beautiful and imposing, with a flowing gracefulness in the drapery that gives an additional finish. The third subject represents a boar hunt, the favourite sport of the unfortunate son of Theseus, who appears with a lance in his hand on horseback, and two other armed attendants on foot endeavouring to destroy a tremendous and infuriated wild boar; on his return from which he heard the unjust accusation of the malicious and revengeful Phædra. The fourth side exhibits a man stretched lifeless on the earth, just thrown from his chariot by the fury of four fiery coursers, which seem to have been terrified at the appearance of a sea monster, faintly distinguished in the corner, though easily recognizable as the one sent by Neptune to seal the fate of the luckless Hip-

polytus in his flight from Athens. The two latter subjects are in low relief and of inferior execution, the artist having clearly devoted all his powers and concentrated all the energies of his art in the two former.

In the library of the college are to be seen extremely interesting specimens of the old Sicilian coins, together with a fine collection of beautiful vases*, whereby the inexperienced traveller may form his judgment of those curious objects of Sicilian antiquity.

I discovered few traces during my stay at Girgenti of the characteristic beauty that distinguished the females of ancient Akragas; the people too, like the place, are dirty and untidy, the appearance of which is considerably augmented by the wretched state of poverty that seems to pervade all classes of society from the nobility down. Priests, friars, and monks, I scarcely need observe, constitute, as in almost every other habitable part of Sicily, a principal proportion of the population, who live by preying on the very vitals of their bigoted laymen, devouring their slender and fast-fading means like a swarm of flesh flies on a decaying carcass. However, the objects around here are so strikingly interesting and various, that the antiquarian, the draftsman, or the naturalist, may pass a few days at this place in the possession of unceasing subjects of diversion. To the mineralogist, the whole country to the north of the town presents an inexhaustible field for the exercise and improvement of scientific information.

* Signor Politi also possesses a collection of interesting articles of antiquity, besides excessively beautiful specimens of sulphuric and other minerals peculiar to the contiguous country. Although he is not deeply learned, his local knowledge and information respecting antiquities and other things are desirable to the visitor, who will find him communicative and easy of access, particularly as the greater proportion of what he has is for sale.

CHAPTER VI.

We mounted our mules on Saturday morning, December 4th, and devoted the whole of that day to exploring the neighbourhood, more particularly about four miles from the town towards the north, where there is an interesting specimen of that uncommon phenomenon called the mud volcano. It is confined to a plain about half a mile in circumference, at the summit of an eminence, the whole surface of which is composed of a thick mud, whose consistency varies with the weather or the season, sometimes assuming a convex, sometimes a concave form, with a number of small cones thrown up at different distances, each of which is furnished with a crater, and ejects a species of black mud, accompanied with frequent rumbling noises and sulphuric air bubbles. Every three or four years it changes its character, at which time it assumes a very different form, is more violent in its operations, and emits mud, calcareous tufa, iron pyrites, stones, quartz, and gypsum, to the height of a hundred feet, with considerable force and loud subterranean explosions. Mineral springs are frequently seen issuing from little fissures, which bring with them naptha and petroleum. The surrounding stratum of this curious place is calcareous, with a considerable admixture of sulphur, muriate of amonia, which are frequently found chrystalised in their various stages of combination with volcanic and other matters.

The place is now called Maccaluba, a corruption of the name applied by the Saracens of Majaruca. It is worthy a visit from any traveller curious in the observation of

nature's operations. Four miles farther, at a place called Aberangis, is a salt mine, which, though little worked now, or frequented, is curious for the mineral products of its caverns, and the adjacent strata. After inspecting the whole, and collecting the most choice specimens, we returned homewards, but previous to entering the town beguiled half an hour most agreeably in the company of an enlightened, well-informed priest, who accidentally joined us on the heights, and whose classical conversation led us back to the more ancient days of his native town, and the examination of the site we were then traversing, which we identified as the position where the Romans lay encamped eight months before the reduction of Agrigentum, in the year 261 B. C. It was here too, at the same period, and scarcely a mile from the Roman works, that Hanno pitched his camp, and after anxiously waiting an opportunity of engaging the consuls, at length brought them to a general action, in which he was completely worsted, and lost all his elephants * and baggage.

Tuesday, the 7th, were solemnized the vigils of a festival consecrated to the conception of the holy virgin; the common occupations of life were suspended—all seemed devoted for the day to the pagan-like forms and superstitious rites of the church—the streets teemed with the noisy population, and the white caps † of the men, and the gloomy costume

* It is singular to remark, that on this, as well as every other occasion where the Carthaginians employed their elephants in Sicily, that these animals contributed more to the dismay and confusion of their own ranks than those of their enemies.

† A white night cap is the only covering worn by the men throughout Sicily, which, in cases of rain or extreme cold, is surmounted by the hood of their mantles or cloaks, pointed at the extremity in the form of a cone, to throw off the water. I have no doubt it is the degenerate remains of the musselmanic turban, which generally prevailed in the island during the long occupation of the Saracens.

of the women, gave a character to the gathered crowds at once ludicrous and picturesque. At noon a silver statue of the virgin was paraded in solemn procession through the streets, accompanied by the military, civil, and ecclesiastical authorities, under the salute of squibs, peteraras, and crackers. In the evening a general illumination took place, and the cathedral was thrown into a blaze of light; within, by an accumulation of wax candles, without, by a multitude of paper lanterns.

We quitted Girgenti at day-light the following morning, and as we issued from the town, beheld, for the last time, those beautiful monuments breaking before us through the morning's dawn with all the force of their local splendour, accompanied with that attractive charm which antiquity has for ever wove round their existence; for the road winds down those rocky heights east of the town, and after skirting the sacred shades of Akragas, passes under the elevated debris of Juno Lucina; from thence it becomes bad, and in wet weather almost impassable for miles, with a bare, rocky, desolate country, until within four or five miles of Palma, when it assumes a more cheerful aspect, wooded, fertile, luxuriant, with occasional rocky defiles, harmonised and softened by frequent picturesque scenery. The approach to Palma is strikingly romantic; vegetation is beautiful, the groves and fruit trees pour forth their riches with oriental luxuriance. As we approached the ascent, a bare white calcareous isolated hill, called Mount Calvary, towered above this beautiful verdure to our left, usurped by a lonely church and convent of Benedictines. Its solitary site and barren earth accord well with the vows of its devoted inhabitants, and it forms not an uninteresting object in contrast with the surrounding scene. Beneath it, by the road side, embosomed in a rock overhung with wood, a copious foun-

tain displayed to us the charms of an almost naked group of washerwomen. They were neither specimens of Albano's playful sylvan nymphs sporting at the fountain of Tivoli, or of the beguiling charms of Tasso's Damascan daughter; but the very extreme of female degradation and debasement, filthy, ragged to nudity, with dirty tanned hides, haggard-looking, and more disgusting than the lowest order of black tribes I ever saw on the shores of Africa. Such is the characteristic picture of the softer sex amongst the lower classes of Sicilians, little calculated for rustic elegance, neither to excite admiration in the other sex, or to put the moral habits of foreign travellers to the test.

Palma is a populous town, advantageously situated on a rocky eminence looking over a picturesque plain towards the sea, from whence it is two miles, and fourteen from Girgenti. It gives title to a dukedom, and is the birth place and tomb of Hodierna, the celebrated astronomer and mathematician. It is but of comparatively modern establishment, nothing being known of it before the latter period of the middle ages. It seems to have engaged little of the traveller's attention, though unmeritedly so; for notwithstanding it boasts not the attractions or celebrity of antiquity, it possesses, I think, qualities that would light up the enthusiasm of the painter's eye, and animate the sentiments of nature's admirer *. The surrounding country exhibits one of the most captivating pictures of rural beauty in Sicily. The town is hemmed in at the back by a hill of olive trees, whilst groves of oranges and almonds, the spreading locust, the vine and almond gardens, give to the

* For the lover of field sports also, this country, all the way to Alicata, has peculiar attractions. Every species of land as well as water fowl abounds, besides hares, rabbits, and other animals.

plain an indescribable appearance of richness, which, with the castle of Monte Chiaro to the right, and the Mediterranean sparkling in the distance, constitute a scene well worthy the artist's study.

The almond abounds here, and forms one of the principal objects of commerce. It is the *amygdalis communis* (amara and sativa) of Linnæus, whose beautiful delicate pink blossom displays the most elegant foliage in nature, and is inimitably ornamental to a country, when, as here, it is blended with the verdant vine, the dark green shades of the olive, the orange, and the lemon. The bloom was now, though in the month of December, just beginning to peep forth, as in the genial days of a transalpine spring, and a long succession of fine winter weather had given a vernal character to the productions of the ground.

This town, independent of a variety of fruits, exports a quantity of sulphur of the best species, which is excavated from caverns towards the north-west, and shipped at what is designated the port, a mere open bay and marina, with a few store-houses defended by an old tower.

The wines of Palma are fine and of great variety, amongst which I tasted a delicious Muscadel of the richest species.

The festive costume of the young women of Palma is remarkably picturesque as well as elegant, an advantageous specimen of which we had an opportunity of observing in a bridal group that had paused on quitting the church to offer up their praises to a madonna niched in the wall, in conjunction with a quartetto of Calabrian pipers, who were at that moment paying their annual tribute at the shrine.

After refreshing at a dirty albergo, or rather fundaco, we continued our route, proceeding over a line of rocky hills, and for the first time looked down on the fertile fields of Gela, the Campi Geloi of the Mantuan bard, and cele-

brated amongst the ancients for the superior quality of its corn and the whiteness of the flower. We reached Alicata, a distance of fourteen miles, at three o'clock, between which and the close of day we occupied in contemplating the local characteristics.

Alicata occupies the site of the ancient and renowned Gela, which, according to the authority of Polybius and others, was colonized forty-five years after Syracuse by a party of Cretans and Rhodians, under Eutimus and Antiphemus, who attached to it the appellation of the river so named by the Siculi, on account of the dense vapours that frequently occurred at its surface. It speedily rose to repute, considerably distinguished itself in the wars between its tyrant Hypocrates and his neighbours, and became so populous and powerful a city, that, in one hundred and eight years from its building, it founded and colonized the celebrated city of Akragas; but, like a sorrowful parent that is doomed to outlive the ruin of his child, Gela survived the destruction of this splendid colony, and gave sanctuary to its wretched sons as they fled from the merciless destroyers of Himilco's Carthaginian host, who, in turn, ultimately laid it in ruins. Timoleon, however, recolonized it, but it was again fated to be destroyed, and it had entirely lost all its importance before the Romans conquered Sicily*. Strabo, in his time, describes it as an uninhabited ruin. In its brightest days it boasted the possession of one of the finest colossal statues of Apollo† in the world, which orna-

* Lib. 6.

† The statue of Apollo, after that of the omnipotent Jove, was, by all the Sicilian Greeks, the most enthusiastically worshiped, and held in the greatest veneration, because Apollo became their tutelar deity, the colonists having been originally sent to Sicily in consequence of the mandates of his oracle at Delphos.

mented the entrance of the principal gate, and was held in great veneration by the citizens, according to Herodotus; who also states that it was at length borne away to Carthage, as a symbol of conquest, by Hamilcar.

On the hill to the westward of the town stood the famous fortress called the rock of Phalaris, built by the blood-thirsty tyrant of Agrigentum, who there inflicted the already mentioned horrors of the brazen bull. At his death it was razed to the ground, and over its ruins were soon reared the lofty walls of Ecnomos, a fortress so called by the Gelans as expressive of the monstrosities once committed on its site; it also fell a prey to the Carthaginian system of annihilation, and the name alone was left, which the Romans consigned to the mountain, Mons Ecnomus*, so familiar to the ear of every classic school-boy, and will naturally call the attention of the reader to the recollection of that circumstance which has served to perpetuate its name—the memorable naval victory gained by Rome over her formidable enemy of Carthage†. It was near here that tremendous fleet, under the command of the Consuls Marcus Atilius Regulus and Lucius Manlius, came in contact with and nearly annihilated the one under Hanno and Hamilcar: the former consisted of three hundred and thirty ships, and one hundred and forty thousand men; the latter three hundred and forty ships with one hundred and fifty thousand

* Now corrupted into the modern title of Monte di Licata; it is composed of a calcareus stratum, and furnishes many beautiful testaceous fossils.

† Anno 255 B. C. The Carthaginian loss was sixty-four galleys taken and thirty sunk, that of the Romans twenty-four galleys, which were lost by wreck on the shore. See Polybius's animated and interesting description. Although it is called by the Romans the battle of Ecnomus, it was fought nearer Heraclea, as is expressly stated by the descriptions of their historians and annalists.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE

Donna di Palma

men. Three divisions, at considerable distances from each other, were closely contesting the palm of superiority at the same moment, all of which proved favourable to the consuls; so that Rome in one day gained three glorious victories. The sea was stained with human gore, and for months after disgorged on its shores remnants of the vessels that were wrecked or sunk. What classic reader can visit this interesting spot without tracing the occurrence with the most enthusiastic recollection, and who, in the remembrance of such a fact, can contemplate it without the deepest, the liveliest emotions of feeling?

Gela was also the theatre of two sanguinary conflicts between Hamilcar and Agathocles, memorable alike for the barbarous atrocities as the humiliating defeat of the latter. But doubts have been variously suggested as to the identity of Gela, which some authors erroneously place on the site of Terra Nuova; an endless variety of circumstances, however, concur in testifying the impossibility, unless we transfer also the site of Ecnomos; but the authority of Diodorus suffices alone to disprove it, who in his nineteenth book says, in allusion to the above-mentioned contest between the Carthaginians and Greeks, "The Carthaginians occupied a certain position near Gela, called Ecnomos, where formerly had been the fortress of Phalaris; on the other side, Agathocles occupied a hold called Falerius, between both of which ran the river, serving as a barrier to each. Falerius was a mile and a half distant from the river to the east, and Ecnomos was distant from Gela the breadth of the river. The soldiers of Agathocles, he says, dying with thirst during the dog days, fled in crowds towards Gela to drink at the river, which being impregnated with salt, infected them with disease and created great mortality." In another part also he observes, that Aga-

thocles, after being totally put to route before Ecnomos, and driven across the river, contrived in the night to throw a garrison within Gela, and he fled to Syracuse, setting fire to the fortress of Falerius.

Gela is further distinguished in the page of history as being the birth-place of Gelon*, king of Syracuse, of the famous comic poet Apollodorus, and the philosopher Timogenes; it afforded also an asylum and retreat to the sublime Æschylus, the celebrated father of the Grecian drama: disgusted with the preference given to Sophocles in the contest for the prize of poetic merit, he retired to this city, and died of disappointment and discontent; though, contrary to this assertion of Plutarch, Pliny says he was killed by a tortoise which an eagle had let fall on his head. His tomb had long adorned the town, before which authors who intended to dedicate their talents to the theatre were accustomed to make libations and to recite their compositions. The Athenians also, in admiration of his genius, decreed honours to his memory.

The modern town derives its origin, as well as its appellation, from the Saracenic invaders, who, as in many other places in Sicily, wrought their new city from the materials of the old; it stands a little farther to the east than the ancient site, which was more upon the eminence, identified by the discovery of ruined fragments at various periods, architectural, cinerary, plastic, together with coins, lamps,

* The history of Gelon is familiar to every classic reader; his reign, though short, was devoted solely to the happiness of his people, and the welfare of the state; arts and sciences flourished under his dominion, and such was the perfection of the former, that in many cases they surpassed the happiest productions of the mother country. Golden medals of Gelon (who coined gold a century prior to Athens), in the highest state of preservation, attest the fact by the extreme beauty of their design and the excellence of their execution.

&c. &c. At the expulsion of the turbaned Painims, the Normans enlarged and fortified it with wall and towers, which, in the revolution of ages, have assumed various changes under the different reigning powers.

In the year 1553 it was partially consumed by a combined armament of Turkish and French incendiaries, who landed and surprised its unresisting inhabitants with their fire-brands. The actual town, which contains a population of 12,000, stands partly on a gentle eminence without the walls, and partly on the shores of a beautiful bay, which is divided into two parts by a projecting peninsula, on whose point stands a battery connected with the remains of an old Norman castle, forming, with the castle of St. Angelo on the hill, the principal protection of the place. A brisk commerce is carried on here, although there is no port, (yet possessing every capability), and the anchorage is exposed on every side. Sulphur is the principal article of export, heaps of which we observed piled along the shore, intended for an English brig that was lying in the roads.

The river, anciently the Gela, runs to the east of the town, and empties itself over a shoal sandy bar into the sea; it flows during the rains with incredible roar and dangerous impetuosity; hence Virgil's epithet in the following passage:—

Campique Geloi,
Immanisque Gela fluvii cognomine dicta*.—*Third Æneid.*

It has received the modern appellation of Salso, on account of the saline particles with which it is impregnated from some salt springs that unite with it near the mountains of Calatanisetta; and it now forms the boundary

* See also Ovid's ib. iv., de Fasti. Pausanias called this river the Southern Himæra.

between the two great divisions of Mazzara and Noto. The latter (so called from the principal town of that name, originally Saracenic, styled Neet) is for the most part rocky, with an extremely stony soil, notwithstanding which it is gramineous, fertile, herbaceous, producing, in many parts, an abundance of wine, oil, honey, grain, and is besides celebrated for the most numerous amongst the reputed towns of antiquity; the mountains, however, of this region, are infinitely less than those of the other two.

After an agreeable walk about the environs, and to the Capuchin convent west of the town, we returned and paused awhile before the bay, where, as we stood in admiration of the setting sun, which was just then beautifully illuminating the ruined walls of the castle with the ruddy lustre of his declining rays, the extreme mildness of the climate we were enjoying was strongly impressed upon us by a group of little children, in a perfect state of nature, sporting in savage gambols round the square or rather piazza; it proved, however, at the same time, the degraded condition of their existence. Good heavens! how melancholy, how revolting to the heart! to think that mankind should be living under such circumstances of wretchedness and poverty, in a country teeming with all the prodigality of nature's riches; but such, alas! must ever be the result where a government fears to give the means of excitement to its people.

We retired for the night to our quarters, at a locanda in the most modern part of the town without the walls; it was *comparatively* clean and comfortable, and we were rendered independent of our viaticum by the well stored larder of a Parisian host, whose gastronomic skill somewhat indemnified us for the meal we had ventured to make at Palma in the forenoon.

As we proposed making a longer journey than usual the following day, we mounted our mules at four in the morning, and on quitting the town at a short distance forded the Salso, but the waters were low, and as we tranquilly crossed that stream, which of old had dealt such dire destruction to the army of Agathocles, its history rushed with redoubled interest on my mind, and I felt all the sacred importance of the scene. Here it was the Numidian cavalry pursued the jaded soldiers of the reckless tyrant, who for the last time traversed the blood-stained tide, after he had mercilessly massacred four thousand of his allies in Gela, and pillaged the whole of their treasure. The pale moon shed a radiant brightness over the banks that might have almost rivalled the mid-day splendor of a more northern sun, and whose reflected light, glittering over the surface of the undulating sea to the right, would bid defiance to the perfection even of a Vernet's imitative powers. Terra Nova * lies about twenty miles distant, along the sinuosities of the shore, the road leading sometimes over the heights, sometimes along the sands, where the conchologist may gratify himself with a variety of extremely handsome and curious shells. The cliffs in places are composed of a green marle, tinctured by the impregnations of sulphur, and producing on their fertile summits quantities of barilla and saltwort. We crossed several small rivers, namely, the Jarubba, Naufrio, &c., and about half way passed the rocky point of Falconara, with its tower and battery, not

* Travellers wishing, like us, to reach Calatagirone in one day, frequently allow themselves to be influenced by the advice of the guides, who, to save scarcely two miles, will go by a road a little inland, which is uninteresting, desolate, marshy, uninhabited, and avoids Terra Nova altogether, leaving it a short distance to the right. Nor is there any other resting place half way, excepting a dilapidated shed by the side of a stream, intended for the repose of muleteers' convoys.

far from whence stands the casino of Prince Butera on an eminence, supposed to be the site of some ancient fortress, which Thucidydes places within the district of Gela.

Terra Nova is a large walled town, situated on a flat eminence a short distance to the westward of a river of the same name; it was founded about the middle of the thirteenth century by Frederick II., consequently comparatively modern, hence its name. Nearly ten thousand souls inhabit its walls; but it is ugly, filthy, dismal, and irregular, with shapeless churches and a host of miserable convents. The palace is a fine edifice, but the cathedral is of no style of architecture, though it presents, with its dome, an imposing appearance from the sea.

A short distance from the walls stands the carricatore or royal magazines, and its little port, by aid of the produce of Calatagirone, exhibits symptoms of commercial activity; it exports corn, wine, a species of coarse cloth, and sulphur, receiving protection from the adjacent tower, called the Torre dell' Insegna.

A band of the celebrated Compagnia degli uniti serenaded us whilst refreshing at the albergo, but they rivalled not the soothing strains of the well-known Cicchi of Bologna. Like the Pfifereri of Calabria, they stroll about the island in parties, but honestly reserve their profits, which are on their return shared in common with the society.

This town evidently has usurped the site of some distinguished city of antiquity, but around whose identity many doubts and much obscurity hang; its only existing testimonials are a few remains of massive substructions within the town; and without, at a short distance from the walls, a single massive column of the Doric order, stretched prostrate on a bare sandy hill, the only solitary relic existing to testify the site of perhaps some splendid Pagan

fane; the component parts, though detached, are perfect, and lie in regular line along the earth, with the exception of the basement and lower shaft piece, which are standing. According to the authority of Ptolemy, Phintia stood to the westward of Heraclea, and near to Agrigentum; therefore I have no doubt but that it must have been either Callipolis or Euboia, which Strabo, in his sixth book, describes amongst the ruined and deserted towns of his time on this coast; however, I submit to others more skilled in antiquarian lore than myself the task of ascertaining such a fact.

Being anxious to reach Syracuse as early as possible, we resigned the plan of exploring the coast as far as Cape Pachynum of the ancients (now Cape Passero), and its intermediate interesting classical sites, which, however, I strongly recommend other travellers, to whom time is not an object, by no means to avoid, for it exhibits the widest expanse for historical illustration; but indeed every town, every part of Sicily, must be dear to the memory of the classical reader, particularly so on this coast, which so peculiarly teems with the most interesting recollections. There the people of Camerina* rose to insolent and rebellious prosperity; and the name of its shores must ever be

* Camarina was founded by Syracuse, under Dascon and Menacolus, one hundred and thirty-five years after its building, and was the third town colonized by that city, according to Strabo and Thucydides. It was situated between the rivers Oanus and Hypparis (modern Frascolari and Camerana). It rapidly rose to a state of prosperity and greatness, and became one of the most powerful cities on that coast; but rebelling against the mother country, it was destroyed. It was celebrated for the manufacture of the most beautiful vases and urns in Sicily, many of which are preserved to this day as monuments of their perfection in the art. The town stood near a lake, the influence of whose noxious vapours so annoyed the inhabitants, that they consulted the oracle of Apollo for

perpetuated in the annals of the historian, as well as the memory of the feeling reader, by the melancholy and disastrous shipwreck of the Roman fleet † under the command of the consuls Fulvius and Æmilius, who, despising the admonitions of their pilots, became the victims of their pride and obstinacy. Out of four hundred sail, three hundred and twenty of them either foundered in the deep or perished on the rocks; so that the coast from Cape Pachynum to Camarina was interspersed with the fragments of the vessels and the lacerated corpses of the crews, for months after exhibiting all the appalling horrors of the charnel house.

We remounted our plodding steeds at noon, passing through the rich-looking environs on the north side of the town, which are thickly wooded with the agrumi, the fig, and the vine. Two roads lead to Calatagirone, a high and a low one, distant about twenty-one miles and a half, the latter swampy and bad in the winter; the former, though hilly, and somewhat longer, is infinitely more agreeable, leading through a sandy forest of cork trees, carpeted with underwood and lentiscus; the scenery, though wild, is pleasing, and about half way we traversed the small town of Santa Maria di Niscemi, a celebrated mart for honey, which the inhabitants abundantly collect from the neighbouring woods. Here we met a convoy of mules laden

† permission to drain off its waters, which was expressly refused; however, in contempt of the pagan mandate, the lake was drained, and salubrity was restored: but a worse fate befel the city, to which it had operated as a defence; the walls on that side were exposed, and afforded an easy access to the enemy, who entered and pillaged the town. Hence the Greek saying in adoption of the oracle, Μη κινει Καμαριναν, ακινητος γαρ αμεινων, and the much used proverb of the Romans, *Ne moveas Camarinam.*

Anno, 254 B. C.

with apples, the production of Mount Ætna—an opportune rencontre, for the day was oppressive, and the fruit more refreshing and delicious than any I ever tasted.

The sun closed his daily career whilst yet we were a league from our destination; but the city, perched as it is on the most elevated pinnacle of the mountain, and still illuminated with his last glittering rays, which were reflected from the windows of the houses like the glimmerings of a distant pharos, producing an incomparably beautiful effect amongst the rude rocky scenery that appeared before us. All, however, faded into gloom as we scrambled up the last craggy ascent into the town, and we arrived in darkness at our comfortless abode in the market-place; where, somewhat to our consternation, a vociferating, fretful old hostess demanded what we had brought to eat, for our basket was tenantless, and appetites sharpened by the keen breezes of the mountain's top, and being giorno magro, not a morsel of meat was to be procured for our heretical stomachs; however, good fortune threw a fellow-countryman in our way, who had at that moment arrived from Lentini, and with much urbanity and good fellowship pressed us to the participation of his fare, which we not unwillingly acceded to in our emergency.

Calatagirone is a large town of twenty thousand inhabitants, in the Val di Noto, situated on the summit of a high insulated rocky mountain, steep on all sides, inaccessible to vehicles of any species, and difficult of approach both to man and beast; it is, however, surrounded by a rich agricultural country, clothed with the vine and shaded by the cypress.

It is of very ancient foundation, being identified by Thucydides, as well as Antonine, in his journey from Agrigentum to Syracuse, as the Hybla-hærea of antiquity,

where the Greeks celebrated their splendid festivals in honour of Juno. In the ninth century it fell into the hands of the Saracens, who fortified it on account of its advantageous position; however, Count Roger, in the year 1063, wrested it from them previous to his first great victory of Cerami over the Painim army, and richly endowed it with the spoil of Zotica, as a remuneration for the friendly disposition of the inhabitants to his cause.

At a subsequent period, the Genoese, in their predatory adventures, landed with a powerful armament, and amongst other places took possession of this, which for some years continued in their occupation. They erected a church, consecrated to their patron, St. George, and gave the arms of Genoa to the town, namely, a cross, which still continues to be adopted. The costume of the inhabitants is picturesque, surmounted in both sexes with a mantle and pointed capuche; that of the females being black, and of the men brown or plum colour, bound with green.

The buildings are not particularly attractive. The Madre Chiesa is a gloomy, heavy fabric of the fourteenth century, without any thing to recommend it. The bridge which unites the two parts of the town was erected at the expense of the Franciscans; it consists of one wide elliptical span. The most modern structures are the Monte de Pieta, and the Casino, on the southern side.

The people are prosperous, industrious, and civil, and the landed proprietors extremely opulent, who, in spite of the unaccommodating locality for the indulgence of state luxury, almost all keep their carriages, which are confined to the limited and monotonous revolutions of a small drive, formed and widened for the purpose, as far as the convent of the Padri Osservanti.

From the more prosperous state of the Calatagironese,

the town assumes in many respects an air of superiority over others of its size; the public edifices are generally pretty good; there are a few fine noble mansions, and it possesses in particular an extensive, well-regulated, collegiate institution. It is celebrated for the cultivation of wines, corn, and the manufactory of a coarse pottery made from a peculiar clay, from which they form also, with tolerable skill, grotesque figures, representing all the various costumes of Sicily.

Guides proffered to us their services in the course of the evening for an excursion to the ancient city of Enna*; but, much as we desired it, circumstances forced us to reject the idea of a visit to the place that has been the scene and subject of so many of the most interesting historical events and poetical inspirations†. It stands on a high hill in the centre of the island, surrounded by a country at once sublime, romantic, and productive; it was originally colonized by Syracuse, two hundred years after the foundation of that city. Diodorus describes it as the most perfectly beautiful site in the island, abounding in groves and gardens covered the year through with every variety of fruits and flowers. It became one of the strongest cities of Sicily, and was not less remarkable for its riches than its beauty‡. Cicero terms it the Umbilicus Siciliæ, and the most fertile spot in the world. It is the fabled residence of the beautiful Pro-

* Now called Castro Giovanni, a corruption of the Roman Castrum Enni, being the place where the Romans established their camp after the termination of the servile war.

† See Ovid Metam. v., Virgil Æneid iv., Milton Parad. Lost iv., Claudian de Rapt. Pros. and its spirited translation by Strutt.

‡ Cicero ad Verr. says of it, Tota vero omni aditu circumcisa atque dirempta est, quam circa lacus, lucique sunt plurimi et lectissimi flores omni tempore anni: locus ut ipse raptum illum virginis, quem jam a pueris accepimus declarare videatur.

serpine, from whose flowery meads and limpid streams she was ravished by the god of hell. King Gelon consecrated there to Ceres, one of the richest temples of the heathen world; whither Asia, Greece, and Rome afterwards, in days of scarcity and famine, made pilgrimages, to propitiate the presiding goddess, and where were solemnised those pompous, incomprehensible, and unmeaning rights of the Eleusinian mysteries.

This place, too, is distinguished for the disastrous termination of the serviles' struggle * in the cause of freedom. Here Perpenna met the slavish host, of whom the blood of twenty thousand paid the price of laudable temerity; and as an example to appal the rest, the vindictive consul ordered the greater part to be crucified by the sides of the public ways.

* B. C. 132.

CHAPTER VII.

We quitted our inhospitable quarters at seven in the morning, proceeding towards Lentini, distant thirty-two miles, and after descending again the precipitous acclivities of this curiously-situated city, we entered into a fine, cultivated, fertile country, surrounded by ranges of hills, whose wild and craggy heights imparted rather a pleasing effect in harmony with the objects with which they were combined. The countrymen were engaged in the labours of tillage, and whose agricultural implements and equipments afforded us no small source of amusement; for they bore all the characteristics of first invention, and the most pristine rudeness. Sometimes a donkey and bullock, sometimes a couple or more of donkeys, and in one place a donkey, horse, and bullock, constituted the team of the ploughshare, which in many cases was merely a crooked piece of wood; however, the purpose appeared answered, for the ground was well worked and clean; a circumstance perhaps owing more to the bounty of nature than the industry or ingenuity of man.

Here, for the first time, the smoky columns of Ætna opened to our view; and traversing the little town of Palma, we discovered, at some distance to our right, the city of Mineo lifting its head above the mountain's top. It was the ancient Menon, or MENENON, built by Ducetius, near which may still be seen the boiling sulphureous springs* of the fabled Palici, and the site of their renowned temple, raised also by the Siculan king, and devoted by Pagan priestcraft to the debasing superstitions of their delusive religion,

* Now the Lago di Naftia.

whilst its vaults re-echoed with the oracles of state policy and sacerdotal heathenism; its altars offered refuge to the unfortunate, and inviolable sanctuary to the oppressed slave—

> Perque lacus altos et olentia sulphure fertur,
> Stagna palicorum, rupta ferventia terra.—*Ovid. Met.*

We halted at Palagonia, sixteen miles, a small modern town, notorious only for its wretchedness and filth, though situated on a salutary eminence, overlooking a delightful vale: the Indian fig cloathes the adjacent rocks with its blazing fruit and everlasting verdure; the majestic aloe rears his pyramid of flowers; and, what most called forth my admiration, the carob tree, which, though common throughout the island, appears to luxuriate in this neighbourhood with incomparable beauty. It is the *ceratonia siliqua* (or St. John's bread) of Linnæus, and rises on a high, upright stem, with fine, elegant, crooked, and umbrageous spreading branches, like those of the oak, at times folding over in a graceful bend to the earth, with beautiful dark evergreen pinnate leaves; the fruit is enclosed in a long siliqua, like a large bean-pod, which possesses a strong saccharine flavour, and is occasionally given as a nutritious aliment to cattle, and frequently eaten by the lower orders. Nothing can be more ornamental to a landscape than this singularly fine tree, for it gives as well richness to the distance as picturesque beauty to a front ground.

From hence the road becomes hilly, with a rocky volcanic soil, mixed with shorl and schistus, strewed with heaps of lava-stones of the most curious species, which enclose hundreds of small testaceous fossils, evidently of crateral ejection, having undergone the action of fire. After making a little digression to the little town of Castellana to our left, for the purpose of seeing a valuable and beautiful collection of ancient Sicilian medals, we entered

into a more cultivated country and arrived at Lentini, the approach to whence, with its lake Biviere to the left, and rural scenery about the hills in front, exhibited a more animated prospect than we had for some time witnessed. The neighbouring hills of this part of the country abound in curious and extensive caverns, producing saltpetre, and rich with sulphuric chrystalizations and stalactitic formations, well deserving the mineralogists researches.

There is another road from Calatagirone to Syracuse, by the mountains to the eastward, which, though of equal distance, is, on account of its rocky and more fatiguing condition, avoided, if possible, by the guides; it is, however, interesting to the antiquarian, for the remains of antiquity that have been lately brought to light by the Baron Judica, at Palazzuolo *.

* Palazzuolo is a town of eight thousand inhabitants, situated on a high mountain, anciently called the Erbessus, and built on the site of the celebrated Acræ, a colony of Syracuse, founded seventy years after that city, according to Thucydides and Pliny, who call its inhabitants Cretenses.

It was colonized by the Romans, who built there an amphitheatre, and gymnasium; the former the baron has recently discovered in the course of his excavations, an occupation in which his love of enterprise seems to constitute his principal hobby, which is, however, fettered by the narrow policy of an illiberal government, that prohibited any excavation without a special royal permission, and in case of discovery claims a right of purchasing any objects at their own valuation. What a stimulus to genius! what an encouragement to enterprize! He has found coins of all sorts, in bronze, silver, and gold, on which he has written an elaborate treatise, embracing those of ancient Sicily. Also every variety of beautiful Sicilian vases (hitherto erroneously termed Etruscan), which he has carefully studied and classified according to the different ages of their production: the earlier ones are rudely ornamented with Egyptian subjects, generally speaking, obscene heathenish superstitions; the latter Homeric subjects and Grecian designs. Besides many other fragments of antiquity, the opening of an infinity of tombs has furnished innumerable curious relics as well as human skeletons, which, however, the worthy baron goes too far in presuming to think are Phœnician or Greek, according to the position of the head. The Phœnicians,

Lentini is a small unhealthy town, situated on a hill looking over an extensive plain, whose fertile fields wrested from Cicero the appellation of the magazine of Sicily, and whose neighbouring caverns are the fabled habitations of Homer's Læstrigon monsters, who sunk the ships of Ulysses, and devoured his companions; hence Pliny's "Campi Læstrigonii."

It is the Leontium of the ancients, founded 717 years B. C. by a colony from Chalcis in Eubœa, and gave rise to many important events in Sicilian history. The rapid increase of its population obliged it to colonize a town which Strabo says lay to the north. It was the native place of the eloquent Gorgias, the scholar of Empedocles, to whom Æschylus was indebted for the embellishments of his sublime tragedies, and through whose rhetorical sophistry Athens was beguiled into its calamitous war with Syracuse.

In the year 403 B. C. it aided considerably in raising Dionysius to the tyranny of Syracuse, and sometime afterwards became the rallying place, from whence the deliverers of that city (Timoleon and Dion), commenced their enterprises against the tyrants, and liberated Sicily from its oppressors. The Leontines were litigious, unprincipled, and always at war with their neighbours: their town was

we know, were all driven from thence by the new colony, and after the arrival of the Greeks in Sicily only inhabited the western parts of the island. At all events, we shall feel much indebted to him for his continued pursuits in the praiseworthy cause. The scenery is wild and romantic in the neighbourhood; old fortresses crown the rocky pinnacles, and monasteries command the heights where beauty reigns, particularly the one at Santa Maria d'Arcia, not far distant from thence. The hill of Palazzuolo is still called Acre Monte, and it is entirely covered with catacombs and subterraneous excavations, besides having on the summit excavated conservatories for snow, which supply the neighbouring cities with ice, as of old; hence Silius Italicus says—

Non Thapsos non e tumulis, glacialibus Acræ
Defuerunt.

on one occasion destroyed by the Syracusans, but, according to Pausanius, shortly after rebuilt. The present town contains five thousand inhabitants, and the place is rendered excessively unhealthy by the insalubrious exhalations from the contiguous lake, particularly during the autumnal heats, when the immense extent of marsh, exposed by its retiring waters, send forth the most noxious, deleterious vapours. The lake, the property of Prince Butera, produces an enormous quantity of water-fowl and eels, besides game in the vicinity, a supply of which we purchased, for our next day's store, from a countryman who had just filled his bag as we entered the town.

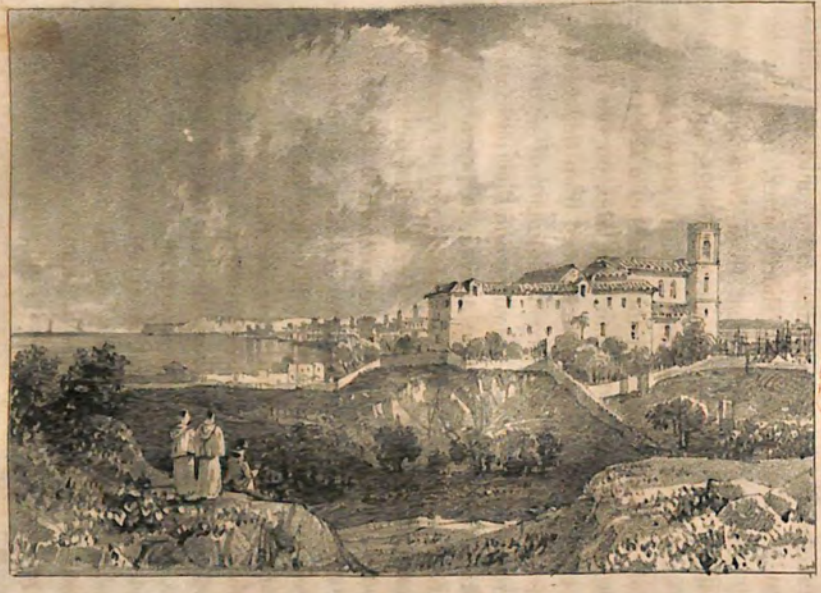
We took up our quarters in Carlentini, founded by Charles V. on a hill above the old town, on account of its more eligible air and situation; it was intended by that aspiring monarch to become a place of importance; but earthquake checked its progress towards the goal of fame, and it remains, like its parent stock, an emblem of sickness and poverty.

Our quarters here were perfectly consistent with the character of the place. We were obliged almost to contest the possession with the myriads of creeping things that tenanted the walls and beds, and felt glad when the hour of repose arrived, that we might, by obscurity, hide from our sight the numberless objects of disgust that encircled us, for the fatigue of travelling proved propitious to our circumstances; the slumbering deity with liberality strewed our pillows with his narcotic flowers, and enabled us to bid defiance to the menacing host.

The morning was colder than we had before experienced in the island; a smart shower of hail assailed us at the moment of departure, which, however, was of transient duration, for the cloud as rapidly dispersed as came, leaving the blue firmament in all its characteristic transparency.

The road from hence is execrably bad; fatiguing, stony, uncultivated; after crossing the rivers St. Juliano and Cantarra, it passes near the small town of Melilli, situated on a pleasing eminence to the left, commanding a view both of the plains and mountains on one side, and on the other bounded by the African sea, the flowing meads of Hybla, from whose trees and stony recesses the inhabitants still continue to lay successful siege against the waxen castles of the industrious bee. After traversing a curious, rude-looking, rocky village, whose locality I should have conceived uninviting to the most wretched of human beings, we rested our animals at the Fundaco del Fico, fifteen miles, a large muleteer's stable, tenanted at one end by a family of squalid looking creatures, who gain a subsistence by vending wine and bread to the travellers who stop there; the north end of the building is shaded by an umbrageous clump of trees, amongst which predominates in size a fine mulberry, though in graceful beauty the spreading foliage of an immense fig, which gives name to the otherwise black looking mansion it adorns. At the southern gable, on a heap of stones, which appeared to us the most cheerful looking part of the mansion, we (by the aid of two or three animated skeletons of the canine race) emptied the contents of our basket. The remainder of the road, though still rocky and uncultivated, exhibits a wonderful picture of spontaneous riches; the earth seems to teem with the most surprising assemblage of luxuriant trees, shrubs, and plants; the orange, the lemon, and the carob tree; the pomegranate, the liquorice plant *,

* The *Glycyrehiza echinata*, (γλυκυς, sweet, and ριζα, root) of Linnæus; it grows in great abundance about here, and from the root is extracted, by boiling, the black juice of commerce, commonly known by the appellation of Spanish juice; when hardened, it is formed into sticks, and packed in bay leaves for sale.



LIBRARY
OF THE
MUSEUM

The Franciscan Monastery and Church of Santa Lucia in front
of the City of Syracuse
Taken from the heights of Acrradina.

and the wide spreading myrtle, whose flowers, as we passed, diffused the most odoriferous scent, whilst the curious palmetto, interspersed with the oleander, and a variety of beautiful campanulates, cover the hillocks on every side.

To the left we passed an *untenanted* Benedictine monastery, (the first instance of the kind that has come within my travelled experience), descended into the narrow wooded bed of a rivulet; and shortly after, from an eminence, descried the steam-boat from Naples ploughing along shore from Augusta, the novelty of whose appearance, (for it was her first excursion on this coast), seemed to impose no small degree of terror in the minds of a few muleteers who had joined us on the road, and who, on viewing the black volumes of smoke as they issued from the chimney, made, with the necessary accompaniments of signs of the cross, reiterated appeals to the virgin and their patron saints. We pressed forward, ere she arrived, to procure accommodations at the only inn in the place, and at four o'clock entered the walls of Syracuse! For the first time since we quitted Palermo, we enjoyed the comforts of a regular inn, where clean linen, clean beds, and good fare, with moderate charges, and much courtesy, will induce me to recollect, with satisfaction, our quarters at the Albergo del Sole.

Syracuse * was founded 732 years B. C. by Archias, from Corinth, who, in compliance to the mandates of the Delphic oracle, with a valiant and enterprising band of followers, landed in the vicinity, and, after many valorously fought battles, succeeded in driving out the Siculi and taking possession of the island, which, from its insular character, they, *pro tempore*, styled Nasos†, but afterwards Ortygia, in

* See Strabo, Diodorus, Cicero, and Livy.

† Νησος (an island), formerly called Omotermona, signifying the bath or spring, alluding to the waters of the fountain afterwards called Arethusa.

honour of one of the daughters of Archias. Years of peace and industry aided their new colony in the rapid march towards human greatness; and, stimulated by that energetic spirit of emulation and unbounded enterprise which so strongly marked the towering genius of their progenitors, the state grew up with such prosperous and inconceivable celerity, that in the short period of a century they colonized three celebrated cities, namely, Acre, Casmena, and Camarina, afterwards the renowned one of Enna; and ultimately, from a continued redundancy of population, produced excrescences from the island composed of four separate walled cities united into one, named Ortygia, Achradina, Tyche, and Neapolis, and encircled by an immense wall eighteen miles in circumference, flanked, at convenient distances, with strong towers, to which the general name of Syracuse was given, from the marshy territory called Syraca that bordered it to the north.

It made no extraordinary figure in the records of events until the celebrated reign of Gelon, under whose auspicious guidance (being less than three centuries after the foundation of the city) it became one of the most flourishing cities of the world, and eclipsed the fame of her Grecian parent, rivalling her most splendid warlike achievements, and, in many cases, surpassing them in the excellency of art*.

No country, perhaps, ever experienced so great a variety of internal political changes and convulsions, or exhibited such opposite and inconsistent characteristics under its varying circumstances; sometimes docile, submissive, ab-

* On the decline of the arts in Greece, from the reign of the first successors of Alexander, they began to flourish in Sicily, and particularly in Syracuse; and continued, with a surprising degree of perfection, until the taking of the city by Marcellus. The golden coins of Gelon, 470 years B. C., and the silver ones of Agathocles, afford incontestible testimony of their pre-eminent excellence.

jectly servile, conspiring against the common country, and abetting its oppressors; at others bold, intrepid, frantic in the zeal for freedom, and struggling, with the most energetic vehemence, against tyranny. It successively assumed the forms of republicanism, aristocracy, and despotism; ruled by governors, tyrants, and kings; some raising it to opulence and the splendour of freedom by their benevolence and wisdom, and by the cultivation of agriculture, commerce, and the arts; as such let us venerate the glorious memory of Gelon, the two Hiéros, Dion, and Timoleon: others destroying the sinews of the state, wasting its means, and impoverishing its population by oppressive cruelties and useless warfare, such the reader will readily call to mind the execrable blood-thirsty characters of the Dyonisiuses, Thrasybulus, Agathocles, and Hieronymus.

In its glorious days of greatness it exhibited talents and energies that at once annihilated its enemies and astonished mankind, whilst the brightest examples of virtue, wisdom, courage, and genius, have diffused a lustre over the chronicled pages of its fame, that never can be obliterated as long as literature and science shall continue to adorn the world.

Heroes whose splendid achievements and military prowess stand out in all the most prominent relief of superior excellence, and still light up the enthusiasm of the youthful soldier; philosophers, poets, and historians, whose talented genius still continues to be held up as a landmark to the muse of modern days; and artists, whose brilliant productions are still exhibited in modern galleries and museums as the most pre-eminent and unrivalled specimens of art; the *beau ideal* of genius, and the models for the aspiring student.

The vast extent of Syracuse, its advantageous position, the convenience of its ports, the strength of its fortifications, the multitude and opulence of its citizens, rendered it one

of the most powerful as well as the most beautiful of the Grecian cities.

The magnificence of its streets and squares, and the palaces, temples, and other edifices with which they were adorned, excited the envy of cotemporary states; whilst the fleets that floated in its ports, and the armies * that dwelt within its walls, created the jealousy and terror of Athens, Carthage, and Rome.

In the year 414 B. C. the Athenians, jealous of the growing power of her Sicilian colonies (particularly of Syracuse), and encouraged by the Leontines, who implored their succour against that state, undertook to prosecute a vigorous war, in the hopes of ultimately making the tempting acquisition of so rich and desirable an island to their dominions: hostilities continued between the parties three years, each experiencing all the alternations of victory and defeat, until the fatal and memorable seige 412 B. C. closed the scene by the total extermination of the Athenian army, and the disgrace of Nicias and Demosthenes, the former of whom terminated his career by a disastrous conflict and defeat on the banks of the Assinarius †.

Animated by the same prospects of lucrative conquest,

* Dyonisius, the younger, during his government of the city, kept in constant pay an army of one hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, besides a fleet of four hundred sail.

† The Asinarius, now called the river Noto, takes its rise in the mountains near the city of Noto, and disembogues itself on the north side of Bernalda Point: it is much increased by two or three tributary streams, and runs through a deep rocky bed with considerable violence during the ruins. It was here the last efforts of Nicias, and his exhausted band, were exerted in the hopeless cause of Athens: emboldened by success in the capture of Demosthenes and his division, the Syracusans followed up the enemy with the most unparalleled and cruel carnage, plunging the poor wretches into eternity whilst slaking their thirst by the stream in the last agonies of death: thus ended one of the greatest wars undertaken between the Greeks, about the month of May, 412 A. C., which is thus remarked by Plutarch in his life of Nicias:—

the Carthaginians, in 404 B. C., with an army of three hundred thousand men, and a prodigious fleet, under Himilcon, laid siege to Syracuse. They posted themselves on the north side of the town, destroying all the temples and the tombs that lay without the walls, particularly the splendid and devoted shrine which the Syracusans raised in grateful memory of their venerated Gelon. But this work of sacrilegious veneration remained not long unpunished: pestilence and famine visited their camp; Dionysius pursued them under every accumulation of affliction; their fleet was sunk or burnt, and their army dismembered, leaving but a few soldiers to return with their disappointed and disgraced leader, and bear the melancholy tale to Carthage.

But the power and prosperity of their arms ultimately rendered the Syracusans oppressive and overbearing to their enemies; proud, haughty, insolent, and imperious to their neighbours and allies; whilst grandeur and extreme opulence plunged them into an unconquerable degree of sloth, sensuality, luxury, and levity, to which they fell the unpitied victims before the arms of Rome, after the cele-

"Εκκλησιας δε πανδημου Συρακουσιων, και των συμαχων τενομενος Ευρυκλης δημαγωγος εγραψατεν ψροτον μεντεν ημεραν εν η των Νικιαν ελαβον, ιερην ἐχειν ζωντας και χολαζοντας ὑβρεως, ικετηριαν την εορτην ἀπο του ποταμου καλουντας ημερα δε ἐν τετρας φθινοντος του Καρνειου μενος ὑν Αθηναιοι Μεταγειτνιωνα προσαγορευουσι."

For the interesting details of this dreadful conflict I must refer the reader to the accounts of Diodorus, and the pathetic narrative of Thucydides: a monumental column still records the spot where Nicias, on his knees, implored the mercy of Gylippus for his wretched soldiers. The festivals above alluded to by Plutarch were accordingly instituted to commemorate the glorious day, which, singular to observe, have been handed down, through a long line of centuries, to the present day, though transmuted now to a christian ceremony, in favour of some popular saint, in the month of May, when two olive trees are borne, in triumphal procession, to the city of Syracuse, and deposited, during some days, in the town-hall, at which period certain privileges are granted by the magistrates to the citizens!

brated siege by Marcellus, 212 B. C., in spite of the tremendous engines of the giant-minded Archimedes *. Immersed in the revelries of Diana's fatal festival, the unguarded inhabitants allowed the enemy to take, by surprise, what it had cost them three years toil and sacrifice to defend, thus ending the glorious career of this once resplendent city, and commencing the melancholy list of its future sorrows and desolation.

Becoming, with the rest of the island, a Roman province, it was, for a long time, governed, robbed, and abused by the oppressive prætors and rapacious questors of Rome †. It afterwards suffered considerably in the civil dissensions of the republic, and was laid waste by Sextus Pompeus, but colonized again by Augustus Cæsar, who restored the town, confining it, however, within the walls of the original Ortygia. Succeeding ages saw it variously occupied and despoiled by the host of barbarous hordes that infested Europe during the commencement of the middle ages, until the year 824, when the Saracens (after a long, obstinate, and most valiant defence, in which every age and sex was vigorously employed), got possession of and destroyed the town. The event of this siege is held in the most lively remembrance in the modern annals of Sicilian history, on account of the energies it exhibited, the unparalleled bravery of the women, the horrible means resorted to by the defenders, and the dreadful carnage it suffered in reta-

* Mirabilior tamen inventor ac machinator bellicorum tormentorum.—*Liv. lib.* 134.

Marcellus also said of him, Why do we not cease fighting with this mathematical Briareus?

† The generous and noble-minded Cicero excepted, who was distinguished, beyond all others, by his justice, moderation, and generosity. The Sicilians looked to him as their common patron, and remembered him, with lively gratitude, for his exertions in delivering them from the tyranny and avarice of the wicked Verres.

liation from the vindictive barbarians. Whilst the young and efficient were employed in resisting the sanguinary and reiterated attacks of the tremendous enemy that menaced them from every side, the aged, the women, and the children, were separately busied in their appointed office of destruction: some in amassing heaps of enormous stones, some in hurling them on the turbaned heads of the besiegers, others in pouring from the walls boiling water, oil, and melted lead, upon the myriads of assailants as they attempted to mount the ruined battlements. But their brave resistance was vain; their doom was sealed by the fiat of providence; the infidels entered, and death, with every species of cruel outrage, ensued. The conquerors repaired and strongly fortified it: henceforward it became one of the strongest holds of the Saracens, until the victorious Normans restored it to the christians on the expulsion of the painim tribe in the year 1034.

However, the cup of misery it was fated to experience was not yet drained to the dregs; the incursions of the Pisans and the Genoese successively wasted it in the thirteenth century, after which pestilence and earthquake diminished its population and destroyed its form.

Under the military and aspiring ardour of Charles V. it was raised to its present condition of a triple-walled fortification, with moats, glacis, and ramparts, &c., which, barring the unfortunate invention of powder and mortars, might have smiled in contempt at the united efforts of the world; but modern tactics render its massive walls unavailable, and is locality disadvantageous.

Notwithstanding, however, this once brilliant city is now compressed within the narrow limits of its pristine colony, although the surrounding environs, once crowded with beautiful edifices, and animated with the busy hum of a teem-

ing population, present but a solitary scene of desolation, and boast not even the marks of its fallen grandeur; although its now unpicturesque, naked tracts furnish neither attractions for the eye nor beauties for the painter, who with any soul can stand on the rugged heights of Achradina and cast his eye over this skeleton of human power and grandeur, without feeling all the sacred devotion of the place, and experiencing a burst of the most delightful emotions and the most interesting associations that the human breast of a refined mind is susceptible of? Who can behold the land that gave birth to the tremendous genius of Archimedes, the eloquent orations of Cicero, the rural strains of the harmonious Theocritus (the prince and father of pastoral poetry, and the inspiring model of the Mantuan bard), without venerating its memory and deploring its fate? What pious christian, too, will view the sacred shore on which the genial rays of christianity first began to diffuse their benign influence in the northern world, without some secret sensations of delight, and at least a momentary indulgence of religious enthusiasm? To the learned traveller, the memory of the illustrious names whose spirits still hover about the spot, will animate him with the interest of its antiquity, and indemnify him for the want of attractions to the eye, by yielding a much higher and nobler source of gratification to the heart.

Acradina, so called from the superior height of its locality, was the first division, according to the authority of all the ancient writers, that became attached to Ortygia, in the form of a regular fortified town. It extended from Ortygia along the shore to the north-east, as far as a small bay, anciently called the port of Trogylus, fatal to Syracuse as it was propitious to Marcellus, who first gained entrance into the city at that point, and ultimately became

the richest, the most magnificent, and the strongest part of Syracuse. It was adorned with beautiful colonades, a forum, a spacious senate-house, the celebrated Prytenæum, Agathocles' boasted palace of sixty beds, and a temple* of the Olympian Jupiter; the latter, in the time of Cicero, was existing in a perfect state, besides baths, and other public edifices, which barbarism and warfare have long laid waste, and whose history time has enveloped in the veil of obscurity. Stones, substructions, and relics lie scattered about; but, like the bones of a charnel-house, without an epitaph to record the noble structure of which they once formed part.

Here, too, were the great quarries from whence the Syracusans excavated the stone to raise all their splendid temples and other public buildings; unaltered in point of form, though adorned by time, they still exist, bearing, as they did two and twenty centuries gone, when the Carthaginian captives were toiling within their rocky bosom, the Grecian appellation of Latomia†. They are interesting not only for their antiquity and extent, but also for the many curious circumstances connected with their history, and the modern romantic garb they have assumed.

The largest and most beautiful is now called the Latomia di Palombino, appropriated to the Capuchin convent that stands upon the brink above, from whence there is to be seen developing to the eye of the visitor who enters that way, the tremendous area with all its rocky forms and picturesque

* This temple measured three hundred and sixty feet in length; it was built by Hiero, near the public square, and devoted to the celebration of the Olympic games. It is described by Diodorus (16th book) as being of great beauty, and adorned with cupolas and pyramids of the most splendid construction.

† Λατομια, a quarry.

scenery. It presents the appearance of an immense dell, surrounded by perpendicular rocks, from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet in height, in whose sides extensive arched grottos and caverns are perforated, which, together with the high, ponderous, insulated masses that rear up their grotesque shapes in every direction, constitute a scene of peculiar wildness and beauty.

A long course of years has covered the rock with an exceedingly rich soil, from whence vegetation springs with all its beautifying varieties, in some parts clinging to the rugged sides with all the tenacity of the ivy branch, sometimes hanging from the heights with the graceful folds of the vine. At one end the friars have cultivated a beautiful garden called the Selva, in which they have reared every species of luxuriant fruit and plant; the pale olive, the delicate-blossomed almond, the fiery pomegranate, and the golden orange, all blend their beauties and their sweetness in this Eden-like, sequestered spot.

Here Gelon, after his glorious victory over Hamilcar, at Himera, employed the Carthaginian captives in working out the stone for the many temples and public edifices with which he adorned Syracuse during his short but popular reign.

Here *, too, the ill-fated followers of Nicias, who survived the melancholy disaster on the banks of the Assinarius, were doomed to wretchedness and misery. Seven thou-

* Here also the Dithrambic bard of Cythera composed some of his sweetest poetic effusions, whilst paying the penalty of his improvidence in censuring the poems of the tyrant Dionysius, who, being his brother-in-law, unusually afforded him an opportunity of redeeming his crime by sending for the prisoner from his rocky cell, and asking him what he *then* thought of his composition; but the soul of the high-minded Philoxenes could not brook the insult, and he only replied, "Take me back to the quarries."—Vide *Plutarch's Life of Dion.*

sand of them were confined within these once dreary precincts, exposed to the horrors of death, famine, and disease, created by their own poisonous atmosphere, until the sympathies of the state rescued them from their abode, and portioned out the survivors to be employed for the benefit of either private or public labour. Then it was many of them moved their tyrant lords to pity, by singing the pathetic compositions of Euripides; some gained provisions by thus awakening the feelings of the passing listeners, whilst others were enfranchised by their masters for teaching what they remembered of his most beautiful tragedies, whose irresistibly moving strains excited their fullest sympathy. Of all the Grecians, the tender muse of Euripides most charmed the Sicilians; from every stranger that landed in their island they gleaned every smallest specimen of his works, and felt a secret pride in relating them to each other. Many of the ancient writers have recorded this interesting story of the Athenians, in a most pleasing style, which has been also most spiritedly detailed by the pen of our modern native bard (the author of Childe Harold) in the following terms:—

> When Athens' army fell at Syracuse,
> And fettered thousands bore the yoke of war;
> Redemption rose in the Attic muse,
> Her voice the only ransom from afar:
> See, as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
> Of the o'ermastered victor stops, the reins
> Fall from his hands, his idle scimitar
> Starts from his belt, he rends his captive's chains,
> And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

It was the fête of the patron saint of Syracuse, Santa Lucia, when my friend and self walked through these rocky labyrinths; and the monastic proprietors, who accompanied us, afterwards conducted us through their comfort-

able possessions within the convent. Like a heathen fortress, this religious sanctuary is approached by moat and drawbridge, and within contains a subterranean golgotha, like the one described at Palermo; a larger space, however, is devoted to the use of citizens who choose to pay liberally for the gratification of seeing, once a year, the smoke-dried corpses of their deceased relatives. Being the day of their pilgrimage, we observed them in many parts engaged in their mournful meditations over the cases they had just opened.

The other latomia, or quarry, now called the prison of Dyonisius, lies towards the borders of Tyche. Though not so extensive as the last-mentioned, its rocks are bold, projecting, picturesque, and full of enormous caverns, where nitre and saltpetre are now manufactured; and a curious isolated rock standing in the centre, on the summit of which there is a ruin, with a spiral approach leading to it, supposed to have been a watch-tower for the centinels who guarded the prisoners that were confined here by Dyonisius. At the north end of the quarry is the celebrated cavern known by the name of the ear of Dyonisius; it is twenty feet in breadth, sixty high, and one hundred and fifty long, forming an elliptic curve; the slightest sound, even the tearing of paper, produces considerable reverberations, which appear to be the great boast of the Ciceroni, who, to illustrate the fact, deafen their credulous visitors with the report of a *pistol* or *peterara*. At the summit of the roof is a small chamber, cut out of the solid rock, forming a tympanum, into which is concentrated and conducted the sound of every thing that occurs below. Tradition says, this curious grotto (although originally excavated to obtain the stone) was subsequently modelled according to the rules of accoustic science, under the direction of the tyrant

Dyonisius, for the purpose of discovering the sentiments or plans of his enemies and state prisoners *, whom he confined below; and that, when finished, he put the artists to death, to conceal the knowledge of its existence from any one but himself and faithful adherents. Notwithstanding there is no established authority to corroborate the fact, I feel strongly inclined, from corresponding circumstances, to give it some degree of credence. It has evidently been constructed with a great deal of art, and with an intent of appropriating it to some peculiar purpose of secrecy; such means we know perfectly corresponded, as in all similar cases, with the fears and suspicions of the tyrant: there he might station a confidential person, and thus become acquainted with a thousand circumstances, which never would meet his ear but through the incarcerated captives who here unconsciously exposed their sentiments in supposed secret communication.

The superior knowledge which the ancients decidedly possessed over us in the doctrine of sounds, enabled them to convey the human voice, through the medium of architectural forms, in any direction, and to most astonishing distances, consequently with facility to effect this plan so congenial to tyrannic rule.

Cicero, in describing the wonders of these immense quarries, says,

"Opus est ingens magnificum regum ac tyrannorûm †."

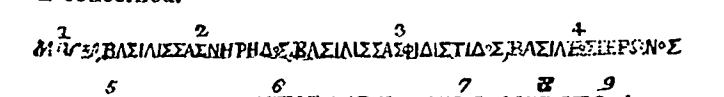
The stone is composed of petrified marine substances, intimately blended with calcareous earth, forming a compact, solid substance, excellent for the purposes of building.

* Verres also, during his oppressive prætorship, confined whole legions in this gloomy abode; here he tortured the unhappy victims of his avarice, to extort from them their money and possessions; and few who entered there under the excitement of his ire ever re-visited the light of day.

† Cicero ad Verr.

The inhabitants are constantly discovering relics and coins of antiquity around those ancient sites, and I was fortunate enough to procure a bronze medal of the reign of Hiero II., which was offered by a little girl for the small sum of a few halfpence.

Adjoining this place is the ancient theatre, situated on a height above; it is one of the earliest structures * of the kind known, supposed to have been built shortly after their invention by Æschylus, and exceeds the length of the celebrated one at Athens by eight feet. It is formed on the side of a hill, the seats of which are cut out of the solid rock, forming three great divisions from top to bottom, with corridors leading from the three grand entrances, and communicating with each other by flights of steps. Along the upper division runs a channel, into which water was occasionally led, to wash and cleanse the theatre; and on the lower part of the centre division may be seen the following inscriptions, which, from their corroded, illegible state, have lead to much hypothetical argument by the lovers of antiquarian lore, inasmuch as the interpretation is concerned.



The stage and scenic appurtenances ran across the plain at the bottom, not a trace of which, however, is now existing, having been composed of less solid walls than the body of the theatre.

Nothing, I think, so strongly proves ancient skill in the science of accoustics so much as these immense theatres, where artificial means were incontrovertibly necessary to aid the conveyance of the voice through such an extent of

* Probably constructed during the sixty years of liberty after the expulsion of Thrasybulus.

space; the whole building was surrounded by a wall, and being open overhead, was screened from the sun by an awning similar to those of the amphitheatres.

There is now, through some unaccountable barbarism, a water-mill erected in the interior, turned by a body of water that falls into it after passing through the acqueducts along the rocky heights above.

The traveller cannot avoid noticing here, as everywhere else, how peculiarly happy the ancients were in selecting the best possible aspects for their open theatres; I presume, that the spectators might be enabled, during the interludes, to fill up any vacant moments by the contemplation of the most agreeable prospects the country could afford. Just behind the theatre is a foundation under a high rock, now called (though for what reason I know not) the Ninfeo: it bears all the marks of a place that has been highly ornamented, there being recesses, niches, &c., which, doubtless, served to contain the sculpture that decorated the fountain. Signor Polliti and the Cicerones have attached to it other names and tales, for the amusement of their antiquarian disciples.

Not far from hence, in a low plain of Acradina, stands the modern church of St. John; the pious friend of christianity will visit it with feelings of veneration and delight. Paul first preached the gospel of Christ in Europe on the spot where it stands; and Marcianus (first bishop appointed by St. Peter, who established the episcopal see) erected there a church, to commemorate the commencement of so glorious an era. The building, of course, has submitted to the convulsions of various ages, sometimes disseminating the salutary principles of the Redeemer, sometimes levelled with the earth in the days of pagan fury. The Gothic walls of the present one are the production of the twelfth century, and form, with the rest of the building, an extremely

picturesque object, deriving considerable pictorial effect from an arcade composed of three Roman arches, which stand in front of the entrance, shaded on each side by the beautiful foliage of some spreading trees.

Under the church are the remains of one of the earliest buildings that were erected, forming now a sort of cryptic chapel, supported by granite pillars, in the oldest, heaviest, and simplest style; a few rude fresco paintings adorn it, and it boasts the mortal part of the bishop Marcianus.

From the church of St. John also are entered the great catacombs of Syracuse, which struck me as more curious and worthy of observation than those of Rome or Naples: who they were executed by, or at what period, is alike unkown; obscurity hangs over their history, and everybody assigns them a different age. At all events, the early christians fled hither from persecution; here, in furtive meditation with their God, they confessed the creed of Christ, and here they silently deposited the mortal parts of those who, with them, had rallied round the banners of the cross.

The excavations are out of the solid rock; a principal one, in a direct line with others diverging from the sides, communicating with each other by smaller passages, or terminating in spacious chambers *, is formed like a rotunda, with vaulted roofs and recesses for urns and coffins: on each side of the passages are also, in a transverse line, hewn out double rows of niches, about the size of the human form, but the extent of the whole is unknown, having been filled up in many parts, and never since explored. The columns that are standing on the left, coming out of the present town

* These spacious chambers probably served for the religious meetings of the persecuted christians. My own opinion is, that these catacombs are cotemporary with the city, and that the use of catacombs was adopted in Rome in imitation of them, after the conquest by Marcellus. The Greeks learnt the custom from the Egyptians and Phœnicians, who propagated the adoption of it in every country they visited or colonized.

into Acradina, belonged to the temple of Juno, described by Diodorus as being near the shore of the great port. Politi, with his accustomed sagacity, states it to be a custom-house, built by the Romans, whose commercial affairs, however, we know, as connected with Syracuse, were neither sufficiently brilliant nor profitable to induce the building of such a fabric as these pillars must have formed part. There is another building in Acradina, which, though of modern date, demands the attention of travellers, namely, the church of the patron saint of Syracuse *, Santa Lucia: it is a handsome building, of modern though impure gothic, with an ornamented façade, and large square tower at the west end. It is connected with a very extensive Franciscan monastery, whose holy friars attach all the sanctity to the shrine of the patroness that they deem suitable to the interests of their community. Tradition says, the saint, during the christian persecutions in Syracuse, suffered the most ignominious and cruel martyrdom near this spot, in the cause of religion, and was in consequence raised to the calendar by Pope Stephen III. The day of her martyrdom (13th of December) being appointed her festival, it is conducted with all the superstitious pomp and idolatrous worship that ever characterised the religious observances of heathenism. A silver statue of Santa Lucia, preserved in the treasury of the cathedral, is on this day borne in solemn procession to the church, where it is deposited a certain number of days for public worship. Crowds rush round her altar—their sympathies are excited—their

* I in vain looked for that splendid picture of the Santa-morte, executed for this church by the bold pencil of Michael Angelo, which gained him the veneration of the Syracusans, and an asylum from the persecutions of the irritated knights of Malta, one of whom he had slain in a duel, and after a most miraculous escape reached this island.

charities exacted! Men and women, according to some previous vow, made in sickness or in sorrow, walk from the town in barefooted pilgrimage to adore her.

We witnessed the festival and its ceremonies, and moreover the procession, which positively seemed more calculated to provoke the ludicrous propensities than to inspire religious feelings.

The silver image, covered with tinselled drapery, mounted on a platform, was borne on the shoulders of four men, preceded by a military band of music, and followed by the ecclesiastical dignitaries in a vehicle very much like a dilapidated cast-off lord mayor's state coach of the last century; a second carriage conveyed the civil and military authorities, whilst a jumbled mass of priests, monks, friars, soldiers, and citizens, formed an endless train in the rear; and such was the conduct and appearance of the *ensemble*, that Catholic, Protestant, Greek, and Jew, who were amongst the spectators around me, exclaimed, with surprise, at the existence of such rites in a christian country of the nineteenth century. If I had been transported again amongst the fettish ceremonies of Dahomy and Callabar, greater paganism could not have been exhibited, greater delusion practiced.

Tyche * (so called from the celebrated temple of Fortune, erected there by Gelon) was the next division that became attached to this great city. It extended north and south along the walls of Acradina, terminating like a triangle in a point towards the heights of Epipolis in the west, with the beautiful gate of Hexapylon at the end, leading to the fortress of that name. Cicero says it was more populous than Acradina, and, according to Diodorus †, was fortified and surrounded by strong walls during the interval of

* From Τυχη, fortuna. † Diod. Lib. xi.

liberty, after the expulsion of Thrasybulus; it boasted a greater number and more magnificent temples than any other part of the city, and, like the rest of Syracuse, was supplied with water by splendid aqueducts, cut out of the solid rock beneath the town, those gigantic and beautiful works executed in the reigns of Gelon and Hiero. Here stood the temple of Diana, (from whose ruins were taken the granite pillars that now adorn the Roman Pantheon) and great gymnasium, erected by the noble-minded Timoleon, for the exercises of youth; where the Syracusans, after his death, instituted public games, to commemorate the extirpation of tyrants and the restoration of liberty by that philanthropic hero.

From this district also was taken, by order of Tiberius, the beautiful statue of Apollo Temnites *, to adorn his library; but the tyrant robber died ere it reached the intended site. Do we not now admire this celebrated statue in the Apollo Belvidere of the Vatican †?

* So called from the open area before one of the temples where it stood, as expressed in Greek Τεμενος.

† A variety of circumstances incline me strongly to adopt this opinion; in the first place, Sicily being the source from whence Rome derived that unbounded store of beautiful sculpture which to this day adorns her museums and private galleries, accounts for the multiplied statues of that subject that are everywhere seen in Italy. Apollo, as I have before observed, was the tutelar deity of the Sicilian Greeks, under the influence of whose oracle they crowded and colonized the island; consequently every temple, every square, and public edifice, boasted a beautiful wrought statue of their god, all varying in the mode of expression, according to the attributes which characterized him, or the fancy of the artist. At the conquest of Sicily, and particularly of Syracuse, by Marcellus, thousands of this and other incomparable models of the art were shipped off for the ports of Rome, to swell the number of trophies that graced the glorious victory; besides the endless list of the most choice and beautiful specimens that were sequestered by the rapacity of Verres and other Roman prætors in Sicily. Antium and Ostia teemed with the

Tyche was built on a rocky stratum of limestone, which, being now cleared of all its edifices, and divested of every thing like vegetation, exhibits a cheerless, desolate scene to the traveller as he winds along the dreary road in order to reach the modern town. Time has swept away every vestige of antiquity, excepting what is deeply stamped on the lime rock; and there he sees, on all sides, cells, recesses, orifices, niches, and foundation lines, belonging to the gorgeous structures which once, in aristocratic majesty, towered above.

An ancient road (on which the marks of carriage wheels are still visible) that divided Tyche from Neapolis, leads, in

rich spoil of the new conquered island, and there many of the most valuable productions of Grecian antiquity that are preserved to us have been found. At Antium, towards the end of the fifteenth century, was discovered the celebrated Apollo, which, from its being placed in the Belvidere of the Vatican by Pope Julius II., received its present appellation, and I have very little doubt is the famed statue of Temnites, so much admired, so much valued by Syracuse of old. I do not think the generality of readers are aware of the immense riches possessed by Syracuse, and indeed Sicily at large, in the way of art, or the exquisite taste and perfection acquired therein previous to its subjugation by Rome; and that the great, "*the eternal city*" owes to this island the foundation of its taste in the arts, as well as the greater proportion of the ancient treasure which now brings the world to gaze within its walls. The concurring testimony of ancient writers, however, confirms the fact. Talking of Syracuse alone, Strabo says it was the richest, the most wonderful, and most powerful city of the Greeks; that, without counting the suburbs, it was twenty-two miles in circumference, with a population of a million and a half of souls. Cicero called it the most beautiful city, an abode worthy of gods and of men, whose spoils adorned and enriched the Roman republic, Marcellus having (not only to increase his own glory but to aggrandize that of the Roman people), borne away statues, pictures, and every thing else that was precious, to the capital of Rome. Livy, too, in alluding to that period, says, the Romans then began to see, to wonder at, and appreciate the beautiful works of the Greeks; besides Pliny and others, who enumerate the various and rich productions of genius that were constantly taken to adorn the works of the republic.

a winding form, through a street bordered by a rock of limestone, the numerous excavations in which identify the spot allotted by the Syracusans for the public funereal monuments and tombs of their distinguished countrymen: they contain niches for the bodies, as well as for votive and cinerary urns. Two, more perfect than the rest, attract the strangers attention, one level with the road, surmounted by another on the summit of the rock to its right; the former exhibits a Grecian front, composed of two fluted Doric columns supporting a pediment, all cut from the solid rock, with an interior excavation possessing the usual appropriate recesses on the three sides of which it is formed. No inscription, coin, or relic, however, has been discovered to denote whose manes it honoured, although Signor Polliti and his fraternity have, to give importance to their antiquarian knowledge, and somewhat of interest to the place, baptized it with the dignified title of Archimedes' tomb, of which we will hereafter treat.

Epipolis was not an inhabited district, but originally a height overlooking the rest of Syracuse (hence its name επι and πολις), now called Belvidere. After the siege by the Athenians, who erected on the summit the fort of Labdalon, it was walled in, uniting Hexapylon into one fortress, called Epipolis. Under the height once stood the splendid palace and gardens of Dionysius the elder, and whither, according to Pliny, the plane-tree, for the first time, was brought from Africa to ornament the grounds. Near Epipolis may still be seen part of that immense wall, built, with surprising rapidity, by Dionysius, in a case of emergency; it was four miles in length, and of immense height and thickness, all of which he completed within twenty days, employing sixty thousand men, and twelve thousand oxen: he encouraged the labourers by his presence; he eat

with them, and frequently aided individuals amongst them by his own personal efforts. The nature of this gigantic work may be correctly judged of by the vestiges that remain, which are nearly nine feet in width, composed (like what are termed the Cyclopean walls) of tremendous square blocks united with cement.

Neapolis was the last acquisition made to the great city of Syracuse, and, on that account, was called Neapolis, or new town. During the siege of the Carthaginians under Himilcon it formed a mere suburb, but contained the proud temples of Ceres and Proserpine *, which being, according to custom, situated without the town, were, together with all the tombs, pillaged and destroyed by the army of Himilcon. It contained a beautiful amphitheatre, which, though in dilapidation and ruin, may still be seen, situated a little below the theatre already described. It was not of great magnitude, but beautiful in point of form; partly cut out of the rock, and in part built of immense square blocks of stone and marble; its vomatories and corridors are perfect, although only partially excavated, and the two grand entrances into the arena are still visible: the arena measures two hundred and sixty-four feet in length, and one hundred and sixty-five in breadth; but the bloom of a luxuriant vegetation now smiles over its area, where once the blood of brute and human victims flowed to gratify the barbarous diversions of Roman taste. It is usually reported to be of Roman construction, because of the marble material found in the building, which some sapient antiquaries have asserted is confined to Roman edifices: had we no stronger testimony, that were frail indeed. Hiero strengthened and adorned his sumptuous fabrics with the marble of Mount

* These two temples, according to Diodorus, were erected by Hiero I., and were ranked amongst the richest of his reign.

Tauros. Diodorus and Pliny style the smaller harbour the marbled port, on account of the marble buildings raised in the halcyon days of Dionysius and Agathocles.

However, we will not hesitate to pronounce the amphitheatre Roman; because that species of fabric is decidedly of Roman invention, and at a period when Sicily formed one of the provinces of Rome. The combats of wild beasts were exhibited with extraordinary magnificence in the time of Cæsar and Pompey, but at that time in the circus, the form of which would not admit all the spectators to an equally advantageous view; hence then the invention of the amphitheatre, the first of which was erected, by Julius Cæsar, of timber, and subsequently of more solid materials, of which the celebrated Flavian fabric served as a model for the numbers that afterwards appeared in almost all the colonies of Rome. The amusements of the amphitheatre were as indispensible to a Roman as the theatre and the opera are, at the present day, to a Frenchman or an Italian: they possessed an inordinate passion for public spectacles, particularly such as were sanguinary, which the government encouraged, as tending to preserve that characteristic spirit which had secured them the conquest of the civilized world. The one of Syracuse then, in question, we may date to about the commencement of the second century of Christ, but at what particular period no relic or writing is extant to bear satisfactory testimony.

Two beautiful gates, called Menetides, opened from Neapolis upon the marsh, across whence a magnificent paved triumphal road led to the temple of Jupiter Olympus. This marsh was the fatal scene of death and pestilence to the Athenians and Carthaginians *: it devastated their armies, annihilated their plans, and proved the strongest

* During the siege of Syracuse, in 413 B. C., one half of the Athenian army perished from the dire effects of this marsh, where Nicias improvi-

barrier and safeguard to Syracuse. Vineyards and gardens have succeeded the fallen tenements of Neapolis, whilst the morass continues to vomit forth its pestilential vapours in the heats of summer and autumn.

Ortygia, or the original town, was confined to the island, and, on account of its commanding the two ports, contained the citadel, the palace of the kings, and the royal treasury; it was adorned with baths, a splendid forum, and temples, and now constitutes the city of modern Syracuse, with the reduced population of fourteen thousand souls! The streets are narrow and irregular, with the exception of the principal one, which intersects the town, and is distinguished by the numerous club establishments called *caffè nobile*, belonging to the nobility and gentry who there lounge away their hours of *ennui*.

There is little or nothing to be admired in any of the public establishments or buildings excepting the cathedral, which was one of the most ancient temples of Syracuse, consecrated to Minerva, and supposed, from its rude, heavy style of Doric, to have been erected in the reign of Gelon, when, by aid of the Himera captives, so many stately edifices rose to adorn the city *. It contained thirteen pillars at the sides and six at the ends, all fluted, and standing on bases about a foot from the level of the common plinth or area; the capitals are heavy, with a more clumsy ovolo than usual, and the shafts diminish with a considerable

dently pitched his camp; and the Carthaginian, Himilco, falling into the same error, lost nearly the whole of that splendid armament Carthage sent against Syracuse, 404 B. C., and left one hundred and twenty thousand bodies unburied on the swampy plain.

* Length, one hundred and sixty feet; breadth, seventy-five feet; height of shaft, twenty-seven feet; ditto of ovolo, one foot seven inches; abacus, one foot five inches and a half; diameter of column at base, six feet eight inches; ditto under the ovolo, four feet nine inches; intercolumniations, seven feet.

taper, all of which tends to evince the great antiquity of the fabric. It was one of the most costly and the most venerated of the Syracusan fanes. On the summit stood a colossal statue of Minerva, bearing a large refulgent shield of gold, whose glittering surface served as a landmark to navigators on the distant sea. It was anxiously looked for, and joyfully descried by the Syracusan sailors on approaching land; and on quitting the port they took with them from the Olympian altar an earthen vase, filled with consecrated flowers, honey, spices, and incense, which, on losing sight of the shield, they cast with superstitious rite into the sea, in honour of Neptune and Minerva.

The interior was adorned with a splendid painting of Agathocles in successful contest with a body of enemy's cavalry, (mentioned by Cicero,) besides the portraits of several kings, &c. The same author also states the gates of the temple to have been ornamented in the richest and most skilful style, with gold, bronze, and ivory, on which were sculptured, with inimitable art, a variety of subjects; amongst others a splendid head of the Gorgon. This temple, like the rest of the city, experienced the fury of its successive enemies, until Verres despoiled it of its remaining riches; and the great earthquake of 1693 shook its foundation, and destroyed the portico; however, the intercolumniations are now walled up, the portico is supplied by a modern façade, and the building appropriated to a christian temple. Who will not glory in the conversion, to see christianity thus triumphing over paganism, and at the same time a splendid specimen of ancient art handed down for our admiration through such praiseworthy instrumentality.

The museum is but in its infant state, which we cannot help expressing somewhat of wonder at in a place abound-

ing with such resources for accumulation in every branch of antiquarian riches; it contains at present little more than the fragments of architectural ornaments, and the torsi of Grecian statuary, with two or three sarcophagi, a few good fossil specimens, lamps, vases, and some interesting paleographic memorials. The principal boast, however, of this museum is the Landolina Venus and an Æsculapius; the latter decidedly an admirable effort of the Grecian chissel; the former, notwithstanding the high estimation in which it is held at Syracuse, I think below mediocrity. Up stairs is the library, where may be seen a fine copy of the Koran, taken by the Augusta murderers from a French officer; and in an adjoining room a fine collection of the agates, jaspers, and marbles of the island.

The lovers of antiquity will, however, find much to gratify, and perhaps instruct, them in the private collections here, particularly in coins and medals, to which the proprietors generously offer every facility of access.

We failed not to visit the celebrated fountain of Arethusa, whose waters have, almost in every age and nation, inspired the eloquent strains of the historian, and the tender minstrelsy of the bard. From a similarity in the qualities of the waters with those of the Alphæus in the Peloponnesus, and the latter losing itself in the earth, the ancients (of whom Pindar and Timæus were the first) asserted there was a communication between the two, and that the Alphæus, after traversing several hundred miles under the sea, rose again in the island of Ortygia*. Hence, then,

* Alpheum fama est huc Elidis amnem,
Occultas egisse vias subter mare: qui nunc
Ore Arethusa, tuo Siculis confunditur undis.—*Third Æncid.*
Besides which see *Pindar Nem., Ode first; Virg., Eclog. fourth, and Geor. fourth; Ovid, Met. fifth; Claudian, Lib. two; Silius Italicus, Lib. fourteen.*

all those beautiful inspirations of genius which, like the brilliant corruscations of a meteor, have shot their vivid glare over the page of poetry and fable, and whose writers thus attached such celebrity to the streams of Alphæus, which flowed by Pisa, or Olympia, that it became customary amongst the ancient Greeks to throw offerings into it, of various kinds, during the festivities of the Olympic games; and in that very interesting romance of *Clitophon and Leucippe*, the river is supposed to carry these offerings as bridal gifts to Arethusa. Και επι την Αρεθουσαν ὑτω την Αλφειον νυμφοζολει οταν αν ἡ των ολυμπιων ἑορτη, κ. τ. λ —Lib. 1st.

Without the association that is excited by the fountain of Arethusa, or the knowledge of its poetic fame, the modern traveller would feel neither interested or inspired by its present locality; it no longer retains any of its ancient beauties; the banks, once adorned with statues and beautified with gardens*, no more exhibit the attractive shores of Arethusa's limpid waters. The fountain now rises out of a rock under the city wall, on the west side of the town, and, from the brackishness of the water, is only appropriated to the purposes of washing; consequently, only frequented by an occasional group of dirty washer-women, instead of those beauteous nymphs, of ideal creation, with which the poet once peopled the silvery spring.

Opposite the fountain a spring of fresh water rises out of the sea, and, in calm weather, reaches the surface without mingling with the salt water; it is called Occhj di Zilica, and is supposed to proceed from the same source as the fountain.

* Hence Virgil's prayer, which, from the present state of the fountain, appears not to have been propitiously heard :—

Extremum hunc Arethusa, mihi concede laborem,
Sic tibi cum fluctus subter labere Sicanos
Doris amata suam non intermisceat undam.—*Tenth Eclog.*

The environs of Syracuse are remarkable for their fertility; besides pulse, grain, and the olive, it produces a great variety of delicious muscadel and other wines; amongst which one still bears the ancient name of Pollian, from Pollis who first introduced the wine from Thrace. The finest honey, too, is found in the vicinity, and constitutes, as of old, a great article of export.

Being the popular fête of the city (Santa Lucia), we saw the place to the greatest advantage, and the people in their most joyous, noisy mood; feasting seemed to be the order of the day, and our inn, the only one in the place, presented a bustling scene of festivity. The Duke San Giovanni, family, and suite, filled the house, with the exception of the rooms we occupied; our acquaintance was the result, and we found them amiable as well as agreeable; though I cannot neglect this opportunity of giving testimony to the general friendliness evinced towards us by all the Sicilians to whom we were introduced.

The novelty of the steam-boat seemed to cause much curiosity in the town; all paraded the Marina, or pulled round in boats to view the maritime anomaly, whilst others eagerly engaged a passage to Catania, whither she proposed touching. In the afternoon we joined a party of Austrian officers, in the steam-boat's cutter, to the waters of the ancient Anapus: we now crossed that celebrated port of antiquity the Portus Dascon*, the scene of so many in-

* Few places in Europe can furnish a more beautiful, a more commodious, or finer harbour than the one of Syracuse, whether applied to the purposes of commerce or of warfare; its anchorage is perfectly good and safe, access free from dangers, and well supplied with good fresh water, and abundant resources in the surrounding country for the supply of fresh provisions. What a contrast between its present condition and its ancient days of glory! A Greek xebec, a Sicilian polacca, and the steam-boat, now formed the solitary tenants of the haven where once a thousand vessels lay proudly floating on its liquid bosom.

teresting events, the theatre of so much bloody contest on its shores as on its tranquil waters; and as we glided over its now undisturbed and silvery bosom my imagination rapidly retraced the bloody days of Agathocles and Dionysius, the misfortunes of Nicias and Himilco, and the assembled fleets of Rome as they fled from the destructive engines of Archimedes. The port is about six miles in circumference, and was once adorned round its wide sweep with arsenal, magazines, and splendid buildings of every description, guarded at the western point by fort Plemmirium. The river empties itself, on the north side, into the port, on the western bank of which was situated the famous temple of Jupiter Olympus, and the adjacent fort, called after it, Olympia. Hence Plutarch says, "Propinquum erat Jovis Olympii fanum: quod capere qui multa ibi aurea atque argentea erant dona cupiebant Athenienses."

This temple, dedicated to the great heathen deity, was enriched with the most costly offerings * of gold and silver from the citizens and kings of Syracuse: it contained a most beautiful statue of Jove, adorned with a solid golden mantle, the former of which was transferred to Rome by its lawless robber, Verres; the latter stripped by the tyrant Dionysius, who, in mockery, observed "such a clothing was too cold in winter, and in summer too warm."

Nicias pitched his camp around the holy fane, and sa-

The small harbour, or Portus Marmoreus, was in a small bay on the east side of Ortygia; in the days of Dionysius and Agathocles it exhibited one of the most brilliant spectacles of architectural splendour in the world. Those two tyrants crowded round its shores the most unparalleled profusion of marble edifices, sumptuously adorned with every species of beauty that contributed to the luxury of architectural taste.

* Gelon furnished the golden robe from the spoils of the Carthaginians, and Hiero enriched it with precious stones of the greatest value.

credly observed the religion of the place, by allowing the priests to remain, and a guard to defend its stores.

Himilco entered its walls with his sacrilegious host, violated the altars, and robbed the treasure.

Ancient writers say it was in the usual style of Doric, though of the largest dimensions; the hand of time has spared but two of its columns to denote the site; though erect, they seem to totter with the northern blast, and age has almost worn down their flutings.

We entered the Anapus *, and the waters being low, tracked the boat up the river, whose banks are covered with underwood and weeds, shaded here and there by the more beautiful foliage of the wild fig, the poplar, and the tamarisk, whilst tufts of the majestic papyrus rise up in luxuriant abundance from the waters' brink, displaying on their lofty pinnacles the waving umbel of the beautiful floral thyrsus, as it is fanned by the passing breeze. It is the *cyperus papyrus* of Linnæus, this river being the only place in Europe where it is known to grow, and was first sent, together with the plane-tree, by Ptolemy, King of Egypt, as a present to King Hiero; the latter of which he planted to adorn his palace garden, the former he cultivated in the Anapus. It is the plant from which the ancients made their paper, and in point of appearance the most remarkable of its species: the root is very large and creeping, the leaves, or rather stem, thick, triangular, and naked, growing as high as ten feet, tapering to a thin point, and terminated by a large compound umbel of innumerable flowers.

About a mile and a half up the river the Cyane empties

* This river received its appellation on account of the grassy weeds it generates, as its derivation implies, Ανα and πους.

itself from the westward; we proceeded along the banks to join the celebrated fountain * of that name, from whence it derives its source; it is extremely deep (according to the natives, thirty-five feet), and though perfectly pure, the surface exhibits a dark dingy blue shade, hence its Grecian etymology †. Pliny says it rose and fell with the change of the moon. I could not, however, learn the truth of the assertion, the circumstance being neither known nor observed by the Cicerones of the nineteenth century. Possibly the present age may be a lucid interval in the annals of the fountain's lunacy.

We now stood on the fabled site of Pluto's descent into the infernal regions with the fair daughter of Ceres—a subject to which we are indebted for the nervous and gracefully eloquent composition of Claudian's Rape; also for the exquisitely expressed fable of Ovid's Fifth Metamorphose.

Nothing now distinguishes this once poetic scene but solitude and wildness, consequently we hurried back to the boat, and after cutting down a bundle of papyrus ‡ stems in the Anapus, recrossed the port, and landed at the Marina.

In the evening we were pressed to accompany the Duke San Giovanni to a ball given by the governor, on the occasion of the grand festival of Santa Lucia, to which no

* Now called Pisma; and there is a smaller fountain adjoining, called Pismotta.

† Κυανος.

‡ This plant was called by the Egyptians Babeer, hence the Latin and English words papyrus and paper. The process of preparing the paper is both simple and rapid. The pith of the stem is cut whilst fresh into thin slices, which, being freed from the external hard part of the weed, are gummed together at the edges, and put under a press, which, when dry, is quite ready for the purposes of writing. On arriving at the inn, we prepared a quantity of it with great success, though in a coarse way, from the hurried manner we were obliged to adopt.

excuses were considered admissible for non-attendance, although we had positively travelled round the island with no other baggage than a change of linen. Our arrival there relieved us from all embarrassment on that score, for the doors of the entertaining apartment were scarcely opened ere we were made sensible of our supererogatory apologies; however, the evening was rendered pleasant to us by the attention of the host; and hilarity, politeness, and hospitality, redeemed in some measure the want of that style and appearance we are accustomed to look for on a similar occasion in our own island.

The following morning we again mounted our sturdy steeds, and set out for Catania, distant forty-two miles. About a league and a half from the town, towards Augusta, stand the ruins of an ancient monument, now designated the Guglia di Marcello; it consists of the remains of a decayed column standing on a pedestal, composed of large square stones united without cement, altogether about twenty-two feet high. Tradition has handed down the fact of its being the work of Marcellus, without the occasion for which it was erected; consequently moderns have attributed it to the commemoration of the conquest of Syracuse, which no ancient writer or sculptured inscription testify as having existed. Is it not, then, rather the sepulchral monument of the celebrated Grecian sage of Syracuse, the great Archimedes? whose memory the noble minded conqueror honoured by celebrating his funeral with the utmost pomp and solemnity, and erecting over his tomb a monumental pillar, distinguished alone by the geometrical demonstration he strictly enjoined by will to be his only epitaph; namely, a cylinder, circumscribed by a sphere, with the proportions underneath which the one bore to the other. For such facts no proof is wanting, and the loca-

lity is identified by the elegant records of Cicero's Tusc. Quæst. ch. v.

The ungrateful Syracusans, unmindful of their great citizen's former services, allowed his memory to be obscured by oblivion, and the pillar to decay, until Cicero, one hundred and seventy years afterwards, when quæstor in Sicily, resolved on ascertaining the spot, and once more exposing its remains for the admiring gaze of the venerators of science and the sage. Here, after a diligent search, he discovered the fallen monument, clogged up with earth, and enveloped in brambles, through whose foliage, however, he joyfully espied the sculptured cylinder, and in adoption of Archimedes' accustomed exclamation, cried out "Ευρηκα." He describes it as situated a short distance from the gates of the ancient city, which strictly corresponds with the site of this guglia; and, I think, whoever will consult the Roman quæstor's beautiful account, together with the local records of Thucydides and Livy, cannot for a moment doubt its identity. Here, then, repose the remains of the greatest geometrician of antiquity, whose sublime discoveries have, in all ages, been the admiration and wonder of the learned. After paying a passing tribute to the manes of the Grecian philosopher, we rejoined the path, and continued our route.

A smiling sun-rise cheered the prospect as it lay before us, beautifully illuminating the numerous capes and headlands that protruded themselves from the classic coast we were about to travel. To the left we passed the bay of Magnisi with its low peninsula, anciently called Thapsus*,

* Θαπτω Sepelio. On account of the extreme lowness of the land and promontory. Lamis, the founder of the castle, was not the colonizer of Megara, but a native of that place; who, afterwards becoming governor of Leontium, was driven out for cruelty.

where the exiled Lamis built his solitary castle, now succeeded by a modern martello tower. The bay is celebrated for the active scene it exhibited in the Athenian war, Nicias having disembarked his troops here from Catania to operate against Epipolis and Hexapylon. From hence we crossed two or three small streams, and arrived at the river Cantaro, the Alaba * of the ancients, so called on account of its black muddy waters, and at whose mouth stood the famed city of Megara, raised on the ruins of the royal city of Hyblon, by a colony from Megara, in Achaia, under a leader named Lamis, six hundred and seventy years before Christ. It was the parent city of Selinon, but destroyed by Gelon for rebellion; again rebuilt, and afterwards entirely razed by Marcellus, as a warning to Syracuse, which he then held in siege. Its walls were bathed by the sea of the beautiful bay which now forms the great haven of Augusta, immortalised by the poetic record of Virgil.

Megarosque sinus, Tapsumque jacentem.—*Fourth Æneid.*

To the west it was surrounded by a rich fertile country, with the honied hills of Hybla rising in the rear, and is still peculiarised by its characteristic richness; wild thyme and the willow continue to encourage the industry of the bee, groves of huge olive trees spread along the heights, whose venerable boughs have strewed the earth for full two centuries with their oily fruits, and vineyards yield their varied beauty to the scene.

On the long low peninsula, which stretches towards the south, from the north end of the bay, now stands the town of Augusta: it derives its name from Augustus, who, after the ravages committed along this coast by Sextus

* ΑΛΑΒΑ.

Pompeius, amongst other places which he rebuilt and colonized, founded a fortress on the neck of land under our present consideration. It was held by the Saracens, who called it Jesebalep; and afterwards, in the year 1229 of Christ, on account of its attractions as a sea-port, and elligibility for the purposes of commerce, demanded the attention of Frederick II., who built a large town and fortification, since which, its history furnishes a continued series of disasters. It was attacked in 1363, by order of Frederick III., for rebellion, and burnt to the ground by the Catanians: it was, however, soon rebuilt by the same monarch; and again laid in ashes by a Turkish armament of one hundred galleys, July 27, 1561, under Captain Sina, who, after sacking the town, applied the fire-brand, and made sail from the flames. Scarcely had it a second time risen from its ruins, ere the destructive earthquake of 1693 shook the whole pile to the earth, burying under its walls upwards of one-third of the inhabitants, and blowing up the powder magazine and light-house. It has survived all its accumulated misfortunes, and a fourth time makes a conspicuous appearance amongst the modern towns of this coast, presenting, with its formidable looking fortification, islands, and light-house, a most interesting subject for the draughtsman, particularly from the sea, from whence he will have a beautiful country in the back ground, terminated by the undulating swells of Hybla.

The present town, containing about nine thousand inhabitants, is composed of three parallel streets, whose houses, in anticipation of future volcanic convulsions, are all extremely low, consequently preclude any thing like grandeur of general effect. The whole is well fortified, and in case of emergency, might be rendered a place of considerable strength and importance. At the point of com-

munication with the main, it is defended by a castle, two strong walls, and appropriate out-works. The southern extremity is guarded by an island, on which there is a light-house and battery, presenting a circular front towards the sea, with two formidable tiers of guns, called the Torre d' Avola; whilst the N. W. side of the town is covered by two other strongly fortified islands, the larger one called Garcia, the other Vittoria. The excellence of the port, which is well watered, spacious, deep, and sheltered, is admirably calculated for commercial purposes, though only a few small craft are now engaged in carrying away oil, with a trifling proportion of fruit and salt, which latter article is manufactured as at Trapani, from the sea water in the vicinity. The bay of Augusta is formed on the north by Cape Santa Croce, thus denominated, from the little chapel and convent erected there to commemorate the landing of the Empress Helena, with a part of the cross from Jerusalem. Little can be said of the people of Augusta, who, in more than one instance, have exhibited traits of such barbarous cruelty, that will for ever distinguish them from their countrymen. The blood of three hundred French invalids returning from Alexandria, in the year 1800, and mercilessly murdered, without the power of defence, has imprinted a stain upon their shores, that will require many years to blot out, many virtues to redeem*. I can only account for their characteristic unsociability and ferocity, by their solitary locality and circumstances; they have very little communication with other places, either by sea or land, consequently more left to the

* Another inhuman attack on a party of poor defenceless Greeks, who were watering in the bay, occurred within the last two or three years, the details of which I could not ascertain.

common propensities of nature, and exposed to the deficiencies of education and good example.

About a mile from the Cantaro, we crossed the St. Juliano, anciently the Millia, mentioned by Livy in his fourth book of the Carthaginian war, and by the Saracens, called Jadeda; from thence passed through the small miserable town of Ruda, five miles beyond which we halted at Lepo, a village situated on an eminence near the river Marcellino.

In order that we might combine the pleasures of refreshment with the contemplation of the country, we carried our basket to the banks of the river, whose waters, as we enjoyed our rural repast, rippled along its stony bed with a melancholy murmuring that seemed to call forth our sympathy for the long years of solitude they had borne since the decline of Grecian prosperity.

The river is a branch of the Lentini, and was called by the ancients, Pantagia, at whose mouth there is a curious port, formed by rocks rising perpendicularly out of the sea, to a height of forty or fifty feet: it is well worthy the observation of the traveller, who will feel no small degree of pleasure in recognizing the rocky characteristscs from the words of Virgil:—

"Vivo prætervehor ostia saxo Pantagiæ."—*Third Æneid.*

A bold rocky projection runs out to the centre of this romantic little harbour, upon which are built a large castle, magazines, and a small village, whose inhabitants are employed in fishing for the tunny, and cutting stone for building, which is exported to Catania, and other places.

Mineral springs of various qualities issue from many parts of this calcareous stratum; rugged caverns penetrate

its sides, whilst the neighbourhood of its barren heights exhibit numerous fragments of antiquity, bearing testimony to the site of the ancient city of Morganzia, mentioned by Cicero, Strabo, and Livy; the latter of whom says, the Romans kept a formidable fleet of observation in its port, to watch the result of the Syracusan tumults, previous to their great siege of that city. The port is now called Golfo d'Ariera, or Porta della Bruca, from the promontory of that name.

At noon we rejoined our mules, crossed the stream, and, soon after, the ancient river of the Leontines, which runs through the lake Biviere; two miles beyond whence we passed the lake Pantano, and the caricatore of Agnuni, with the Torre Mauro, where may be also seen the remains of an immense large gothic church, commenced, but left unfinished, in the thirteenth century, by Frederick II.; and after traversing a flat swampy country, we arrived at the Giaretta, so called from the curious shaped boat, in the form of a small flagon, formerly used to cross the waters. It is the Simetus of the ancients, one of the largest rivers on this coast, and served as a boundary between the territories of Leontium and Catana. Its peculiarities inspired the muse of poetic fable, which makes this stream the metamorphosis of the nymph Thalia, after her amour with Jupiter. From the many tributary rivulets that fall into its course, towards the north and west, it is both dangerous and difficult to pass after a heavy rain; however, we now forded it without even the possibility of splashing our suspended legs, as we rode across its diminished bed. Some authors erroneously place the site of Morganzia at the mouth of this river, which is impossible, both from the descriptions of the ancient authors, and the nature of its locality, which is flat, shallow, and exhibits no traces of

having ever been different; the shore here is flat and sandy, very unlike the whole coast north of Catania, which, from the same low sandy shore as here, has been converted into a high, bold, black, rocky coast by the lavas of Ætna, which at some very remote period have flowed down to the shore, and encroached upon the territory of the sea. This fact has been proved by excavations, which have brought the shaft to beds of sand and shells.

A great quantity of amber is found about the river and on the coast, as at Alicata, but all taken to Catania for sale. I, however, procured one small specimen from a native, valuable both for the rarity as the peculiar beauty of its colour, which is an irisated purple. We now entered the plain of Catania, which extends from the sea sixteen miles to the west, in a total state of uncultivation, and renders the ride as far as the city tedious, dull, and unvaried, excepting by the spreading volumes of smoke and fire, as they playfully issue from the towering summit of Ætna, or the appearance of a few coasting barks gliding to or from the port of Catania.

The sun had already sunk into the west, and we travelled the last two or three miles in obscurity until we reached the entrance of the "illustrious city," where the moon, just beginning to merge from the horizon, cast a silvery lustre over every object, around which, as in all similar cases, with the addition of imaginary aid, gave to them attractions and beauty more than their reality possessed. We established our quarters, by recommendation, at the Albergo dell' Elefante, where we had no reason to complain of either fare, accommodation, or attentions.

CHAPTER VIII.

Catana, according to Thucydides, was founded seven years * after Syracuse, by a colony of Chalcydians, under Euarchus, who left Naxos†, drove out the Siculi, and settled there, where, for some time, they flourished in the new city which they built; but, being afterwards conquered by Hiero, the inhabitants were expelled, and succeeded by a party of Megarese, Geloans, and Syracusans, transported thither by order of the tyrant, who gave it the name of Ætna. At his death (which happened in this city) the Siculi, in conjunction with the original Grecian inhabitants, who had settled at Inuessa, came down and attacked the colonists of Hiero, and obliged them to fly from the town, which they again became possessed of, and restored its former name of Catana. Dyonisius, in revenge for the succour it afforded to the rebels of Syracuse against him, levelled it to the ground, from whence it soon rose again to its former greatness. It was amongst the first acquisitions made by the Romans in Sicily, when it became the residence of a prætor, and was adorned with public edifices of great magnificence. Sextus Pompeius, however, included it in the general ruin and devastation he committed on this coast during his short but destructive sway, and it was again restored and colonized with Romans, by Augustus Cæsar, in a more splendid style than ever, receiving, some years after, during the architectural splendour of imperial Rome, those gorgeous edifices, whose ruins, though buried under

* 725 B. C.

† Hence its name from Κατανεω, habitatum colloco.

the accumulated heaps of Ætna's petrified streams, still continue to be the boast of modern Catania. Frederick II., in imitation of his royal predecessor's levelling system, totally destroyed it for opposing his rights to the throne. His thirst of vengeance being thus sated, he permitted the inhabitants to rebuild their dwellings, to control whom he erected the large castle which is still standing, under the name of Ursino*, having survived the shock of earthquakes and the destruction of the burning flood of lava that has flowed around it.

In 1669 it was overwhelmed by a torrent of lava nearly four miles in breadth, which rose over the walls, and buried the greatest part of the city †; and in 1693 ‡ was again entirely destroyed by the disastrous earthquake of that period.

After such a succession of calamities, arising from the combined effects of war, fire, and earthquake, it has nevertheless again sprung up out of its rubbish with redoubled splendour and reviving embellishments, and now constitutes the most compact, most beautifully ornamented, and most attractive city of the island, with a population of sixty-five thousand inhabitants; the streets are spacious, and built with extreme regularity, being all at right angles from each other, and profusely adorned with churches, convents, and palaces, the two former of which are so numerous, and, generally speaking, so richly embellished, as to betray the predominating influence of ecclesiastical dominion.

What a remarkable instance this ill-fated city displays of

* This castle, once situated on the borders of the sea, was surrounded by the lava of 1669, and is now crowded with houses built upon the hardened stream, which has thrown it back considerably from the coast.

† In the reign of William the Good the town was also destroyed by the volcanic fire and earthquake, when twenty thousand of the inhabitants perished.

‡ Between forty and fifty thousand souls are said to have perished in this earthquake.

that instinctive love and preference for our native soil which nature has implanted in the heart of man! Notwithstanding all the melancholy ravages it has witnessed, the successive annihilations it has suffered from the convulsions and fires of the neighbouring mountain, it has as often re-appeared on the list of great cities, and risen with fresh beauty from its ruins, undismayed by the fiery deluge that has from time to time poured down from the groaning crater, and laid waste their houses and their lands. Unappalled by the disasters of earthquake, whose dire effects are still fresh on the minds of the present generation, they have returned with undaunted zeal to the restoration of their town, and the cultivation of their native soil; fearless of any future recurrence, they calmly proceed in the work of renovation, and with the material that has destroyed the old, reconstruct the various combinations of the new city; for all is lava*—houses, walls, and pavement!

Such a spirit of intrepidity and confidence can only be accounted for by those sublime energies with which the great disposer of events has thought it wise to endow mankind under similar circumstances. But this is no novel case, no solitary illustration of the fact; innumerable other countries spread over the wide surface of the globe, peculiarized by local dangers, evince an equal fearlessness of the dangers to which they are subject.

The public buildings of Catania, though striking objects to the eye of an uncriticizing observer, are composed of a combination of architectural fantasies, without unity of design, or that chastity of style which so peculiarly distinguish the productions of ancient art; a most licentious ex-

* Though the whole city may be said to be constructed of lava, the generality of public buildings and some private edifices are faced with a calcareous stone brought from La Bruca, already mentioned, and the Syracusan limestone.

cess of ornament seems everywhere to betray a love of the picturesque, in preference to that effect produced by magnitude and simplicity. Costliness and labour are redundantly applied to palliate ignorance and redeem bad taste.

However, the general mass of travellers do not view edifices with either the pedantry or scrupulosity of the architect, but look more perhaps to general effect; in which case Catania, I think, will more frequently please than not.

The principal square, called Piazza Grande, or Piazza dell' Elefante, is of considerable dimensions, regular, fronted on the three sides by the town-hall, seminary, and cathedral, and ornamented in the centre with a fountain, surmounted by a large elephant of lava, supporting on its back an ancient Egyptian obelisk of granite, covered with hieroglyphics; altogether producing an effect highly ornamental to the space that surrounds it. The water flows from each of the four angles of the pedestal into a small basin, from whence it is again emptied into a large reservoir beneath.

The cathedral possesses a very small proportion of the original structure erected by the English abbot, Angerius, in the year 1094, at which period it was consecrated to the Holy Virgin, and richly endowed by Earl Roger with fertile lands in the neighbourhood of Ætna. It fell in the general disastrous demolition of 1693, and occasioned the total rebuilding of the present fabric, which is certainly one of the handsomest, and least surcharged with unmeaning decoration, in the town. The cupolo that rises from its summit, and the pillars that ornament its facade, are grand and imposing; the latter were stripped from the ancient Roman theatre by Roger, together with other rich materials, for the construction of the old cathedral. It is now consecrated by the superstitious Catanians to their tutelary

patroness, St. Agatha *, to the total rejection of the more holy patronage of the mother of the Redeemer! and the festivals, rites, and processions observed in honour of her memory (which really savour more of paganism than christianity), seem to take precedence, in the considerations of the inhabitants, to the services peculiarly devoted to the Deity.

The churches of this city, like those of Naples, are gaudy, indiscriminately stuffed with costly materials, and if they took rank from their riches, might be entitled to a great share of our admiration; to those who are more fond of the style than I confess myself to be, I will recommend the gilded gratings, the painted prison, and the gorgeous altars of the conventual church of St. Juliano.

The church of Santa Maria dell' Ajuto contains a curious and rather singular instance of superstition and catholic delusion, namely, an exact model of the holy house of Loretto, erected at the expense of an individual, who, about the middle of the last century, sent an architect to Loretto, to take a plan of its character and dimensions;

* Saint Agatha was a young woman of Catania, who suffered the most cruel torments of martyrdom during the Christian persecutions of Decius, consequently was enrolled on the list of saints, and by the influence of priestcraft, became the adopted tutelary divinity of the city, thus operating as a formidable engine in the service of sacerdotal interest and power. The great festival of Saint Agatha is on the 5th of February, on which occasion a splendid car is borne through the town in solemn procession, distinguished by the same bigotry and superstition as the Palermitan one of Santa Rosalia.

In the small church of Santa Agata delle Carceri (anciently sacred to her) may be seen an altar piece, representing the martyrdom of the virgin of Catania, by Bernardus Niger, 1388; it is executed in the stiff deformed style which peculiarized the Grecian masters of that age, but rendered interesting by the appearance of the Roman amphitheatre, as it stood previous to being overwhelmed with lava, which forms one of the accessories of the picture. Near this little church also was discovered the marble sepulchre of Charondas.

and such is the scrupulous imitation with which he has constructed the model, that whilst viewing it I felt transported again before the celebrated shrine of pilgrimage in Italy.

The Benedictine convent of Saint Nicolo d'Arena is one of the wealthiest monastic establishments known ; the holy friars originally lived in the present convent at Nicolosi, from whence, however, they were frightened away by the tremendous eruption of 1669 ; after which they raised the present splendid edifice in Catania, where they finally settled their abode ; the vastness of its extent, as well as richness of material, are striking, but the grandeur of effect arising from the magnitude of dimensions is considerably destroyed by the morbid taste exhibited in the style of architecture, which is loaded, heavy, and divided into a thousand unmeaning parts. The hall and refectory are of noble dimensions, and the library richly adorned, and well stored with valuable works. A sumptuous staircase of fine marble leads to a number of princely galleries, the longest of which is upwards of one hundred and seventy feet ; a great proportion of one wing is applied to the use of a museum, containing an excellent collection of objects in the different branches of natural history, as well as choice specimens of antiquity, such as beautiful bronzes, vases, coins, lamps, and Egyptian idols, &c., well deserving the notice of the antiquary or the man of taste. The Græco Siculo vases are particularly striking; many of them are ornamented with Homeric subjects, of the most beautiful composition and the most graceful design.

The church is the finest and most spacious in Sicily, measuring five hundred and fifty feet in length and two hundred and fifty feet in breadth, supported by beautiful marble columns. The great altar is encrusted with the most valuable stones, such as jasper, agates, &c. The lateral chapels adorned with paintings and other rich de-

corations, whilst the choir and stalls, which are of wood, exhibit the most highly wrought and exquisitely finished specimens of carving I ever saw, displaying in a variety of compartments the most interesting subjects from religious history, standing out in all the boldness and beauty of high relief. The organ, which is justly esteemed a specimen of art and workmanship equal to any the age has produced, is celebrated as much for the ingenuity of its mechanism as for the combined qualities of its sweetness and extensive compass, and I think in every respect surpasses what the boasted one of Haerlem was; it produces the full effect of a complete orchestra, with the perfect imitation of string as well as wind instruments. It is the work of a Calabrian monk, and a brother of the order, whose mortal remains lie buried beneath the instrument that has gained him fame.

On the hard dingy lava that surrounds this monkish palace the fraternity have, at an immense expense, formed a garden, which, on account of the nature of the soil, is confined to the formalities of Dutch taste; tessalated walks intersect each other at right angles, box borders enclosing the orange, the cypress, and the Indian fig, two or three little fountains, ornamented with grotesque groups, with fine terraces that command a beautiful prospect both of the country and the sea.

Prejudiced as I profess to be *in toto* against all monkish institutions, I feel somewhat afraid of expressing my opinions on the subject, for fear of being unintentionally led into the exaggeration of what is unfavourable to the members that constitute the different bodies; but I confess I could not resist smiling, as I quitted the walls of this gorgeous fabric, at the pride and worldliness every branch of the establishment displayed, notwithstanding the tenants it enclosed, profess, in consonance with the humility and self-denial of their

pious founder, St. Benedict, to abandon the world, its follies, and temptations, and to live alone for religion and their God!

The creator of the universe never intended the physical and intellectual energies of mankind to be thus entombed, to become thus devoted to the gloom of monastic seclusion. No! it is destined that we should be useful to each other, and that every individual shall contribute his aid, by example or exertion, for the general benefit of social welfare.

The cause which led Saint Anthony to the first formation of such institutions (namely, the distress of wandering hordes, arising out of christian persecution), has long since ceased; the terrors of persecution are dispelled; the church, secured from its enemies, reigns in peace, and man can, in safety, embrace the faith of Christ—with freedom practice their religious observances; therefore, their existence now becomes a dangerous abuse, affording only an excuse for leading a life of listlessness and profligacy, of licentiousness and crime.

Every one who has witnessed their poisonous influence in those countries where they most prevail, such as Spain, Portugal, and Italy, will readily concur with me in condemning them as baneful and destructive to social welfare; but they are the veins and arteries by which the system of popery is fed and kept alive, therefore must exist and be encouraged as long as the omnipotence and infallibility of the pope are acknowledged.

The museum of Prince Biscari is an object which no visitor to this place should neglect seeing. It was established by the present prince's grandfather, whose taste, literature, and talents, were supported in the laudable pursuit by the splendour of pecuniary resources: he explored, by expensive excavations, the ancient edifices that had been for centuries buried under the streams of Ætna, and wrested from their tomb the most valuable relics of antiquity. The site

and ruins of Camarina, lying on his estate, furnished him with an inexhaustible store of all that was beautiful and valuable; and, by purchase, he procured antiquities of inestimable worth from the ruins of ancient Centuripa, to which place his collection is indebted for, perhaps, some of the most precious and admired articles. To enumerate the contents of this interesting collection would require the arrangement of a voluminous catalogue; therefore, suffice it to say, it is adorned with beautiful sculpture, fragments of Roman and Grecian architecture, inscriptions illustrative of the ancient mystic rites, bronzes, ollæ, lamps, Egyptian and Grecian idols, valuable gems, cameos, and intaglios; also a fine collection of ancient Sicilian vases, remarkable for the variety as well as peculiar beauty and preservation of the figures and subjects that adorn them, serving as a fine illustration to the treatise by the Baron Judica on the subject. I strongly recommend the attention of every traveller to them; their examination and study are neither unproductive nor dreary. A beautiful collection of most valuable medals, from the earliest ages of Sicilian history, here afford to the classic observer a mine of information; they throw a light on the distant ages of antiquity that otherwise might lie obscured by the dim veil of time; they are the faithful chronicles of events, of manners, and customs; they immortalize heroes, sages, and kings, and hand down to us the state of knowledge, the arts, and taste, which distinguished the remotest ages of those nations which first shone in literature, arts, and arms.

Amongst other objects particularly admired are the colossal torso, the Vas Murrhinum*, and a beautiful bas

* A small blue vase, made of a composition much valued by the ancients, called murrha. Pliny says it came from the east, and was held in such estimation, that Augustus, at the taking of Alexandria, selected nothing from the royal furniture but a beaker of murrha. The torso is

relief found near the shore, under ground, in the year 1584, the subject of which is the initiation into the nocturnal mysteries of Bacchus. The grouping is fine, and the figures full of expression, joyous, animated, characteristic!

There is also a choice collection in this museum of all the minerals peculiar to the island; marbles, jaspers, agate, all the varieties of volcanic production, with innumerable curious objects ejected from the crater, besides beautiful fossils, and many specimens belonging to every other branch of natural history.

The same enterprising and benevolent prince employed, during a long period of distress in Catania, an immense number of poor labourers in forming a garden on a barren tract of black lava, about three-quarters of a mile from the town, now called the labyrinth or Villa Sciarra; he died, however, before the design was completed, and total neglect has almost reduced it to a state of dilapidation: the museum, too, it is to be lamented, betrays a proportion of the same decay, strongly evincing that neither literature nor taste have formed appendages to the pecuniary inheritance of the grandson.

The garden is composed of fish-ponds, grottoes, walks planted with the caper, the Indian fig, the cypress, orange, and lemon trees, and commands a beautiful prospect of Mount Ætna and the sea.

Catania vies with Naples in the number of its charitable institutions; but, like them also, they are badly conducted and much abused: they want the vigilance of a Brougham to direct the just appropriation of the bequests made for their support.

supposed to be of Bacchus; it is in the most nervous and finished style of Grecian sculpture, a *capo d'opere* of art, and a perfect model of human symmetry.

This city* is also celebrated for its excellent university; the sciences are all taught under learned professors, particularly divinity and civil law, and it is altogether regulated with a great deal of good management; it possesses an excellent cabinet of natural history and antiquities, to which strangers are freely admitted; indeed I cannot too warmly praise the extreme kindness and courtesy manifested to travellers by all the directors of public establishments, as well as that of private individuals who posses valuable collections of antiquities, of whom there are many, and all seem to feel a pleasure in affording either entertainment or instruction to those who express a wish to see them.

Being anxious to avail ourselves of every moment of our sojourn in this delightful town, we set out early on the following morning of our arrival, per boat, to visit the celebrated islands, or rather rocks, of Cyclops, the Cyclopum Scopuli, which have afforded so much interesting subject for the pencil of ancient fiction and mythology; the huge rocks which the blinded monster hurled after the taunting Ulysses and his fleet. They are distant about six miles from Catania, and we arrived just as the glorious orb emerged from the horizon, and shed upon the scene a saffron blaze of morning light, so bright, so beautiful, that its effects were more picturesquely captivating than any thing of the kind I ever recollect witnessing.

These rocks, now called Faraglioni, rise boldly out of

* Catania was renowned, in the earliest periods of its Grecian history, for the sciences which flourished within its walls, a proportion of which has been handed down as an inheritance to the modern inhabitants who assuredly exhibit a greater taste for literature than any other people of Sicily. Charondas, the great lawgiver and philosopher, also Andron, the inventor of the pantomimic art, were of this city.

the water, just opposite the town of La Trezza, in a beautiful romantic bay of the same name, formed by Cape Molini to the north, and Lognina Point to the south; and so attractive and enchanting was the picture that presented itself as we advanced towards the spot, that I could not help sacrificing a few minutes to the securing a more durable impression of it than the memory is capable of retaining amidst such a diversity of scenes and objects, and which appear in such rapid succession to the eye of a mere passing traveller, that the recollections of the most beautiful sentiments flit away as evanescently as the meteor's blaze.

The rocks are three in number, standing in a line from north to south, the highest of which rises about two hundred feet from the water; they are composed of vertical, columnar, basaltic prisms, filled up in the interstices with a cement in some parts as hard as the basalt, consisting of calcareous matter, enclosing perfect fossils of the scallop shell. The superstratum of the basalts consists of a bluish grey volcanic tufa, (not a marl, as has been suggested), which appears to have undergone the action of fire and water; and, besides beautiful zeolites, analcimes, quartz, and lucite, contains a perfectly novel and hitherto undescribed mineral, somewhat resembling analcime in the general character, though found by the application of the goniometer to differ considerably in the angular formation. The southernmost is a high pyramidal one, with a pointed pinnacle and small detached columnar masses at the base. The two others are broader and more extensive, with rounded summits, the largest of which is called the Isle of Acis, and is cultivated, with the vine and other little productions, by some of the inhabitants of La Trezza, who have built a grotto for their use during the labouring sea-

son. A large cistern, with the fragments of dilapidated buildings, prove it to have been formerly inhabited; probably used as a fort. This island, from its more advanced state of decomposition, is less interesting to the naturalist than the others, the basaltic prisms being less regular, and more divided by wide fissures. The formation of the smaller rocks is perfect and extremely curious; and I have not the least hesitation in thinking, from the marine fossils they enclose, that the whole of these rocks have been forced up out of the sea by submarine volcanic action, on which the cinders of Ætna have subsequently fallen, and formed the tufa that now covers their surface.

La Trezza is a small town and caricatore, built entirely of black lava whitewashed in parts, which gives it a grotesque appearance at a distance: a few small craft were loading grain when we were there, which gave its shores an appearance of animation and activity. The bay is not without its classic interest, for, independent of the beautiful fiction with which poetry has adorned it, it was the theatre of a sanguinary conflict* between the Carthaginian fleet and the one of Syracuse; also the occasional resort of the Roman fleets, as well as the one of Sextus Pompeius during his contest with Octavius.

The morning was mild and genial, and on quitting the bay we again lay upon our oars for a few minutes, that I

* 396 B.C. Himilcon, proceeding from Messina towards Syracuse by land, whilst Mago coasted along shore with the fleet, was impeded in his march by a considerable irruption of Ætna, the stream of whose lava flowed to the sea, consequently cut off his approach to Syracuse by the south, and obliged him to wind round the north side of the mountain, thus causing a separation between the land and sea forces, which Leptines taking advantage of, came to an action with the wary Mago, in which, together with his own life, he lost one hundred vessels and fourteen thousand men.

might complete the sketch I had commenced of the scene. The high pinnacled rock stood to the left, Acis and the other to the right, between which appeared the town of La Trezza, and beyond it, to the north, the small village of St. Anna, with Ætna and its glittering distant towns and villages towering over all in the back ground, and emitting dense volumes of smoke from his lofty peak.

We reached Catania* again at ten o'clock, and after breakfast commenced an examination of the antiquities, which consist of ruined sepulchres, the remains of baths, of a naumachia, of an amphitheatre, and theatre.

The amphitheatre was of great magnitude, built of lava, and founded on a bed of the same material; it was destroyed by Theodoric the Goth, the greater part of the stones taken to build the city, and the remaindar overwhelmed by the lava of 1669. It was discovered through the enterprising spirit of Prince Biscari, who excavated also the ancient theatre, a ruin of considerable interest; much obscurity, however, hangs over its origin. It is generally supposed to be the ancient Grecian theatre, where Alcibiades harangued the Catanians, though I think strongly contradicted by the existence of bricks, of which the vaulted parts are principally constructed, and being an article never known to be employed by the Sicilian Greeks, renders it difficult to reconcile the idea of its being of Grecian architecture. It was of immense size†, and composed of three stories, with galleries and vomatories en-

* Nothing can exceed the beautiful appearance the town of Catania exhibits from the sea, with the many domes and turrets of its churches and convents, the luxuriant hills of Ætna glittering above, with its white studded villages and towns, and the still more distant perspective of its smoking crater.

† Upwards of four hundred feet in diameter.

crusted and highly ornamented with rich marbles. The proscennium was supported by immense granite columns, and the whole enriched with beautiful sculpture; however, the ornaments were all stripped by Roger the Norman, for the decoration of other buildings; and the granite pillars, as before mentioned, applied to the decoration of the cathedral. The exterior wall is still perfect, though, like the one of Marcellus in Rome, crowded with modern habitations; the staircases, some passages, and a few other parts, remain in good preservation, where still are visible, vestiges of the aqueducts which led water into all parts of the theatre for cleansing. Could we for a moment delude ourselves with the hope that this was the early Grecian fabric, where the eloquent Athenian beguiled the captive Catanians with his soothing rhetoric; where first flourished in Sicily the perfected system of the Æschyline drama; how much more satisfactory the imaginary pleasures derivable from its contemplation! how much more enjoyable those illusions we are wont to form when standing within the precincts of an edifice consecrated both by fame and time!

Adjoining the theatre, small remains of the odeon, and the ancient gymnasium, are to be seen, but neither curious nor satisfactory. A thousand other fragments of antiquity are pointed out by the Cicerones, which, as they afford no illustrative information, and uselessly consume the traveller's time, are not worthy of being visited. This town, however, merits a much longer sojourn than travellers are inclined to sacrifice to it; not so much on account of the ancient buildings and their sites, as the innumerable articles collected from them, and the taste and spirit with which their study has been pursued by the inhabitants, thus affording an inexhaustible fund of information connected with classical lore.

On account of the hot locality of Catania, the early part of the year is most recommendable for a visit, at which period the country is luxuriant and enjoyable, the air fine and the weather such as may enable the traveller to avail himself of those numerous attractive excursions in its neighbourhood, which powerfully claim the attention of the draughtsman, the naturalist, and the antiquary. Amongst the most interesting may be reckoned the town of Centorbi, anciently Centuripa, or, according to the Greeks, Centuripyon; it was celebrated of old for the high state of perfection to which the inhabitants cultivated the fine arts: in sculpture and engraving they surpassed all the Grecian towns of Sicily, as is strongly testified by the beautiful statues and inimitable cameos that have been at various periods discovered there. They were equally distinguished for their learning as well as refinement, and being one of the fairest and most flourishing cities in Sicily, excited the jealousy of their neighbours. When it fell into the hands of the Romans, it became a prey to the wicked rapacity of Verres, and lost all its characteristic greatness by a total destruction under Pompey. Octavius, however, partially restored it, and it sunk to rise no more in the civil wars of the thirteenth century, when Frederick II. annihilated the place, and transferred the inhabitants to the new town of Augusta.

Nothing can exceed the romanticity and picturesque beauty of its locality; it is situated on the summit of a mountain, twenty miles to the north-west of Catania, composed of a group of five pinnacles, abrupt on every side, and difficult of access, with a noble prospect of the gigantic Ætna to the east, and the luxuriantly fertile vales which hem it in on every side. It still affords testimony of its former greatness, and continues to furnish beautiful

specimens of art* in the way of coins, vases, and other relics; the ruins of baths and sepulchres are still visible, together with the remains of an ancient bridge, and the castle of Conrad, whose resistance provoked the ire of Frederick. The ruins of an Augustine convent add to the numerous objects of its pictorial merits, which, with its ancient celebrity, render it a place replete with interest. Although now but a dreary and solitary abode, perched on an isolated mass of savage heights, it is impossible not to behold it with the most animated recollections; to look back on those early pages of its glory when, whilst it shone in the full blaze of learning and refinement, and attained all the meridian splendour of excellence and prosperity in the arts, northern nations were as yet scarcely known or peopled, at all events still immersed in the obscurity of ignorance and babarism.

The commerce of Catania is not very important; it, however, exports a quantity of wine, fruit, and wheat, and supplies the island of Malta with the latter article, as well as a large proportion of snow ice every year from Ætna. Its silk manufactories are extensive, and employ a number of poor labourers; and a great quantity of amber is worked up here into a variety of trinkets, which, though generally speaking enormously dear, are neither beautiful nor useful.

Ætna.—This mountain, from its form, size, productions, and extensive volcanic operations, constitutes one of the greatest objects of wonder and curiosity in the island, and,

* The excavations of this town have furnished more beautiful and valuable objects of antiquity than any other in Sicily, such as gold and silver coins, vases, statues, cinerary urns, and precious stones, &c.; and has greatly contributed to the valuable store of Prince Biscari. The mountain on which it stands is covered with a volcanic tufa, overlaying a stratum of marine concretions of great beauty and variety, well worthy the naturalist's notice.

inasmuch as its volcanic phenomena are concerned, the most formidable and magnificent in the world; from the earliest ages of antiquity it has occupied the attention of men of learning and genius; historians have described its majestic form, its picturesque features, its gloomy caverns, its romantic horrors, and the molten streams that have successively burst from its sides and carried devastation to the shores beneath. Poets*, dressing it up with all the beautiful imagery of mythology and fiction, have made it the theme of their most harmonious and eloquent strains; whilst philosophers, in the investigation of its origin, have established a thousand contradictoty theories, and exhausted all the varied speculations which the mind of man has been capable of forming or suggesting.

Its etymology is unknown, though it with great confidence has been by different authors variously deduced from the language of the early inhabitants of the island, from that of the Sicels, from the Greek, and by some from the Hebrew; thus rendering it too bold and presumptuous for me to undertake an explanation of its meaning; which, however, it is not essential to conclude, relates to its fiery characteristics, if we may be guided by a reference to almost all the volcanoes we are hitherto acquainted with. The Saracens called it Gibel, or "the mountain," which appellation it retained by the country people after their expulsion, with the addition of the Italian meaning, namely, Monte di Gibel; hence then the corrupted term Mongibello, by which it is most familiary known in the surrounding neighbourhood of the present day.

* Pindar is the earliest poet known to have noticed the eruptions of Ætna, Homer being perfectly silent on the subject. Thucydides mentions three eruptions; the first without date, the next after the arrival of the Greeks in Sicily, and the third in the seventy-seventh Olympiad.

The form of the mountain is a species of obtuse, truncated cone, rising from a broad spreading base, and terminating in a curious bifurcated apex, whose elevation from the level of the sea may be established at very nearly eleven thousand feet, deduced from a mean of the philosophical calculations and measurements made by the celebrated De Sausure, and other naturalists of eminence, who have studiously analysed the characteristics of this mountain.

The Ætnean district is bounded by the sea to the east, and on the other sides by the rivers Giaretta and Alcantara, which take their rise almost from the same point towards the north-west, flowing in opposite directions round the mountain's base, when, after being increased by many tributary streams, they empty themselves into the African sea, the former to the south, the latter to the north, thus enclosing one of the most populous, luxuriant, and fertile parts of Sicily.

Ætna is divided into three distinct regions or zones, denominated la regione colta, or fertile region; la regione sylvosa, or the woody region; la regione scoperta, or desert region; which exhibit all the characteristics and productions of the torrid, the temperate, and the frigid climates.

The lowest, or la regione colta, extends in its broadest part, (which is on the Nicolosi side), nearly eleven miles, with a circumference of eighty-four, in that line of direction which includes Paterno, Aderno, Bronte, Randazzo, Francavilla, Taormina, and Catania. It is interspersed with populous towns and villages, striated in different directions with indurated streams of dreary looking black lava, that have been emitted in the various irruptions of the mountain. The soil is composed of beds of tufa and

lava in all its other various stages of decomposition, whose fertilizing properties contribute to the peculiar richness of this district. It is everywhere carefully cultivated, and divided into orchards, vineyards, pasturage, corn lands, and olive groves. The fruits are of the most delicious quality, and in the greatest abundance, with all the species peculiar to warm countries; figs, oranges, lemons, olives, pomegranates, the Indian fig, the palma christi, the vine, cherries, pears, and appples, all flourish in the greatest perfection. The wines made from this region are of excellent flavour and quality, and some of the apples in the upper part of the district equal or superior to the much esteemed New Town pippin. Sarsaparilla, cinnamon, pepper, and a variety of other spices, grow in great quantities. In the months of May and June the inhabitants collect also a quantity of the Spanish flies*, which in that season swarm about the olive trees, and prove an article of considerable profit to the proprietors of this neighbourhood.

The second zone, or the regione sylvosa, is composed of a belt of wood, encircling the mountain, upwards of six miles in width, separated in parts by excellent extensive pasturages, and inhabited by the herdsmen and cottagers who tend the numerous flocks that are fed there.

* This fly is of a beautiful green colour, with a golden burnish, and was supposed to belong to the meloe genus of natural history, until very recent discoveries have proved it to be a species of the lytta, *cantharis vessicatoria*. The natives collect these insects by spreading cloths under the trees, and shaking them off early in the morning, at which time they are weak, and incapable of flying away, from the influence of the night air; they are then killed by exposure to acid vapour, afterwards dried in the sun, and packed in dry cases, for the valuable purposes of materia medica, in which they are most frequently employed for vessicating the skin, though occasionally administered internally.

The surface of this region is very unequal, presenting everywhere small conic mountains with their craters, which have been formed by lateral eruptions from the great vent of Ætna, but are now beautifully covered with wood, herbs, flowers, and vegetation of every species; the most curious and beautiful of these is Monte Rosso.

These forests, in the days of the ancients, were famed for the number of wild beasts they gave shelter to, and furnished in those times abundant sport for the active disciples of Nimrod; but they no longer frequent these abodes, with the exception of a few wolves and wild boars, the chamois, and the roebuck, which inhabit the upper regions; whilst in the lower part foxes, hares, edible snakes, partridges, and rabbits, are found in great plenty. Hunting is, however, rendered difficult, by the predominating influence of odoriferous scents, from the quantity of aromatic herbs that everywhere spring up with luxuriance amongst the vegetation of this as well as the upper part of the lower region; which circumstance is also celebrated by Aristotle, Plutarch, and Diodorus.

Nothing can be more delightful than the climate of this region; whilst the heats of a burning sun are scorching the surface of the lower district, here may be enjoyed all the delightful sensations of a mild, temperate climate: cool refreshing breezes, loaded with perfumes from the flowers and aromatic herbs that cover the ground, blow in every direction through the woody shades of the forest; whilst the eye is delighted with, in many parts, some of the most heavenly, the most picturesque, and romantic spots on earth, particularly near the pine forests of Bronte, which are exuberantly thick, and rendered almost inaccessible, on account of the rocks, the caverns, and the precipices that surround them.

The wood of which this region is composed is principally ilex, beech, oak, fir, cork, pines, chesnut, poplars, and thorns. The pines are of great magnitude in the neighbourhood of Bronte; groves of cork and luxuriant chesnut cloathe the eastern side, near Mascali, Piriano, Piemonte, and Carpinetto. The oaks, though finest on the northern side, do not correspond with our more northern ideas of the beauty and magnitude of that tree; however, they are remarkable for being excessively thickly leaved, and the picturesque form of their spreading boughs.

The upper part of this region is also peculiar for the number of very curious grottoes and caverns that in many parts present themselves, and furnish a variety of interesting objects to the geologist and mineralogist; particularly of felspar and augite* in their different combinations. The Goat's Cavern, so called from the flocks of that animal resorting thither for shelter, is one of considerable dimensions, and served, (previous to the erection of the more commodious retreat called the Casa Inglese), as a place of nocturnal repose for the visitors who explored the mountain's top: it stands about five thousand four hundred feet above the level of the sea, embosomed in a wood of oaks and other umbrageous trees, commanding splendid prospects from occasional openings where the wood has been thinned or felled. In the neighbourhood are worthy of being seen two little mountains, with their extinct craters varigated with vegetation to a considerable depth down the interior sides, the volcanic soil with which they are covered being of the richest and most fertile species.

The third zone, or la regione deserta, is composed of a

* These two minerals form the principal ingredients, though in different proportions, of all earthy volcanic substances, whether compact, vessicular, or amygdaloidal lavas.

gloomy tract of lava, volcanic flags, and cinders, extending with a very gradual elevation to a distance of seven miles, and terminated by a flat plain, from whence rises the great cone, with a most abrupt ascent, to the height of nearly one thousand and sixty feet. Nothing can exhibit a more dreary scene of barrenness and desolation than the whole of this elevated district of the mountain; not a blade of vegetation springs up to afford variety to the eye; all is a gloomy expanse of waste, combining the effects of an unrelenting winter with those of destruction and devastation, arising from the heaps of ignited matter ejected from the yawning fiery gulf. Many parts of the year this region is enveloped in snow, which article the natives preserve throughout the summer in the enormous caverns before described, for the purpose of administering luxury to the inhabitants of Catania and the surrounding towns. The Bishop of Catania derives a great source of revenue from the sale of the snow, which is furnished from his stores near the cone. When wanted, it is packed in straw or grass, and brought down on mules to the places of consumption.

The cone of Ætna, like those of all other volcanoes, is composed of scoriæ and loose cinders, which render the task of ascending fatiguing beyond description. The summit is covered with rocky lava and hot ashes, from whence mephitic vapours* and sulphureous smokes frequently arise, to the great annoyance of the travellers, and which create considerable distress to the lungs of some persons.

The crater, though more horrific and extensive, presents to the eye a picture less curious or gratifying than others I

* The application of volatile salts to the nose efficaciously dispels the effects of these vapours, and affords great relief to those who suffer from them.

have witnessed. The edge of the summit is almost a mile and a quarter in circumference, with a plain at the bottom of the abyss, from whence rise up several little cones round a large one, out of which incessantly issue volumes of smoke, and loud vibrations even in the most tranquil state of the volcano. But it is of little avail describing the interior of a crater that is every day changing its form; every slight eruption gives a new character to the scene, and produces totally different forms and appearances. An eruption is always predicted by the drying of springs and wells in the neighbourhood, by slight earthquakes, and tremendous noises from the crater; and its termination indicated by successive showers of black, red, and white cinders, or ignited earthy powder.

It is these volcanic cinders, consolidated and cemented by the agency of water, which constitute that substance generally known by the appellation of tufa: they concrete into different states of compactness, and when decomposed by atmospheric influence form a rich productive soil. Zeolites, leucites, and crysolites, are generated by filtration of water through tufa, and are found either enclosed in that substance or on the surface of its substratum.

At the base of the cone are the ruins of an ancient building, designated by tradition the philosopher's tower, supposed to have been erected by Empedocles for the convenience of prosecuting his philosophical examination of the volcano; others again attribute it to Adrian, who frequently ascended the mountain to witness its wonderful phenomena; whilst some absurdly have suggested its being a watch tower, raised by the Normans. At all events, at whatever period, or by whomsoever it was constructed, I think it is clearly evident to the eye of common penetration, that its original destination must have been similar to that

of the Casa Inglese, which was erected not far from hence by the English during their occupation of this island, for the accommodation of travellers, and consists of several chambers, with stabling for the mules; for such is the gradual ascent as far as hence, by way of Catania, that visitors may be with facility conveyed thither by those animals, or in a lettiga, which is frequently had recourse to by ladies whose laudable curiosity leads them to view this extraordinary natural phenomenon.

The most difficult task, the most arduous and painful undertaking, is the ascent of the cone; but its achievement is amply compensated by the sublimity of the prospect; all the labours of the exhausted traveller are redeemed by the splendour of such a scene as he commands when arrived at the summit: elevated thus beyond the level of the earth, he views in one wide sweep the whole geography of Sicily, the distant hills of Calabria, Malta, and the Lipari islands; which if illuminated at the time by the radiance of Aurora's golden beams, far exceeds in beauty, diversity of objects, brilliance, and sublimity, any similar picture in the known world.

Clear weather and moonlight nights should be chosen for an excursion to Ætna; and it should be so managed to arrive at the summit by sunrise, which may be effected by leaving Catania at noon the previous day. The road leads through Nicolosi, and by the celebrated convent of San Nicolo dell' Arena, the original convent of those pious Benedictines who emigrated from thence after the eruption of 1669, and established their famous palace of luxury in Catania; a few lay brethren only are left to regulate the extensive estates in the neighbourhood belonging to the monastery, and who occasionally entertain travellers on their road up the mountain; but comfort fled with the

portly Benedictines into Catania, and it is now a most undesirable, wretched place of halt. It was founded by Simon, the nephew of Count Roger the Norman: since which it has escaped many perils, and more than once been surrounded by the melted streams of lava in their descent from the fiery gulf. Records are preserved there of all the eruptions of Ætna, and the various phenomena that have accompanied them, blended at the same time with a few marvellous traditionary tales, savouring much of monkish trickery as well as Roman Catholic superstitions: one particularly interested me, since it explained the origin of a delusion that is practised on the bigoted and the ignorant of the modern population of Catania: namely, the bearing, (in cases of public calamity, such as famine, awful eruptions, or plague,) in solemn procession, the veil of the patroness, Santa Agatha, which is warranted by the rules of priestcraft to stay the one, or divert the course of the other. The record, or rather the monkish fiction, states, that on the 1st of February, A. D. 254, a stone was ejected, during a great eruption, from the mountain, containing the following inscription, and which fell on the tomb of Santa Agatha:—

Mentem sanctam, spontaneam, honorem Deo, et patriæ Liberatione.

The priests and people of Catania, moved by such a miracle, immediately opened the sepulchre, took out the veil that enveloped the body, and carried it in front of the burning lava, which suddenly changed its direction, and left the city in safety. Hence then all the folly, the mummery, and bigotry, excited by this sacred veil, which is enshrined in the treasury of the cathedral, and exposed for public adoration on the holy festival of the saint.

From the convent of San Nicolo the ascent becomes more steep, and it is about fifteen miles to the summit of

the mountain; it may be performed without difficulty or fatigue as far as the base of the cone, and at any period of the year without danger, excepting under the immediate influence of snow storms; during which, or thick rainy weather, an ascent could produce little or no gratification.

Concerning the antiquity of Ætna as a volcano, nothing satisfactory is known, although some geologists have pretended to affix a distinct number of years to its eruptions, by the numerous beds of lava overlaying each other, and interstratified with layers of what they term rich earth, formed by a gradual decomposition of each stratum of lava; for which operation they assign a certain number of centuries. No argument, however, can be more fallacious or inconclusive, since it is now indubitably ascertained, that the generality of those beds found interlaying lava strata, are nothing more than volcanic cinders that have, as is usually the case, fallen at the close of each eruption, and which exhibit not the most distant traces of vegetable matter. Besides, the time required for the decomposition of lavas by atmospheric agency differs considerably, according to their situation, their consistency, their state of fusion, and component parts; and we know for a fact, that some of the lavas, both of this mountain and Vesuvius, have been decomposed, converted into fertile soils, and covered with verdure, before others of double their age, which still continue, in their pristine obduracy, to resist all external influence. With respect to the origin of the mountain, the same philosophical reasoners have suggested it to have gradually risen from the level of the island by the successive accumulation of its volcanic ejections, which hypothesis is, I think, successfully combated by the existence, not only of all those products which characterize primitive rocks, but also an abundance of beautiful perfect

fossils, peculiar both to secondary rocks and alluvial soils, which it is very improbable could appear in such perfection, supposing them to have undergone the action of fire and ejection from a crater. Independent of which, its enormous height and snowy summit have been objects of admiration and wonder to the earliest writers of antiquity who are known to have mentioned it.

The mineral productions of Ætna furnish an inexhaustible store of gratification to the amateur. Antimony, copper, manganese, mercury, iron, tellurium, titanium, specular iron, cinnabar, amianthus, and vitriol; which with beautiful chrystallizations of pyroxene, chrysolite, olivine, felspar, schorls, leucite, hornblende, mica, and many others, are abundantly found round the mountain.

Mineral springs of various qualities also abound in different parts, particularly on the north-west side; some peculiar for the strong mephitic vapour they emit, others for the curious dyes with which they are impregnated; whilst those in the neighbourhood of Bronte and Paterno possess valuable medicinal properties, sulphurious, saline, and ferruginous.

The lavas of this mountain are very numerous, the principal basis of which is pyroxene and felspar, in different proportions; of course, a variety of other ingredients enter into their composition, giving them different characters and appearances. They exist under various forms and colours, according to their state of fusion: compact, amygdaloidal, vessicular, porous, vitrified, and in the earthy state of tufa. In the more compact ones are found beautiful specimens of the afore-mentioned crystals, with all their angular edges perfectly sharp and unaltered by the action of heat, which inclines me to think their formation has taken place subsequent to the ejection of the lava.

CHAPTER IX.

VAL DEMONE.—At Catania commences the third great division or district of Sicily, called Demone, which embraces the whole of the north-east side of the island, including the Faro, and extending along the northern shore as far as the river Rocella, which forms the boundary. It is the most elevated part of the island, and contains the highest mountains, of which Etna, Madonia, and the Neptunian range, are the most conspicuous. It is the most wooded and inhabited, and contains by far the greatest number of populous towns and villages. The amenity and fertility of the soil has induced a considerably greater degree of cultivation than peculiarizes the other districts. The land is comparatively well farmed, and the people more affluent: and although, on account of its hilly character, it produces less grain, it abounds in oil, wine, and silk, together with the richest and most delicate fruits. The aloe there I observed grows to an enormous size, and the oleander flourishes with peculiar luxuriance, even in the most barren parts, being frequently seen springing up spontaneously, with all its fragrant bloom, out of the sandy shores of the sea.

The scenery is wonderfully exuberant, and diversified with striking objects; it is at once bold, austere, sublime, romantic, picturesque: and if any place in the world is more singularly calculated than another to perfect the aspiring genius of a landscape painter, it is this.

The terrible sublimities of its mountains, with the precipitous acclivities, bold projecting rocks, and foaming torrents; the impervious labyrinths of its gloomy forests,

or the more pleasing shades contrasted with splendid vistas of brightness that are to be witnessed in those magic scenes that characterize the neighbouring shores of Faro; eminences crowned with churches and convents; ruined castles or towns perched on the rugged heights of isolated mountains; all viewed through the lucid medium of a transparent atmosphere, and brightened by the glowing lustre of a southern sun, tend to constitute an ensemble that might realize the most sublime imaginings, the most perfect *beau ideal* of pictorial inspiration. They furnish ingredients to form the rich and studied combinations of a Claude Lorraine; the gay fascinating scenes of a Gaspar Poussin; the savage gloomy compositions of a Salvator Rosa; or to inspire the animated descriptions of a Torquato*, a Petrarch, an Ariosto, or a Dante.

Man, however, has contributed nothing towards the embellishment of all these beauties which nature has so largely lavished on the land; and the traveller, as he proceeds along the barren tracts over which the common path too frequently leads, and through filthy, miserable looking towns, villages, and hamlets, will probably experience some little disappointment after my descriptions; but let him not pass over the country as if performing a task, like many tourists I have seen there, accomplishing the journey for the mere purpose of saying they had done so, and to make a journal, or rather catalogue, of the places they have traversed. Let him digress from the general track; studiously and without prejudice examine nature, and he will find the portrait faithful; he will then, I am sure, readily concur with me in asserting, such are the natural capabilities of the country, that if it were blessed

* Vide Tasso's description of the garden of Armida.

with that prosperity and independence peculiar to a more enlightened policy than it now enjoys; if the industry, taste, and emulation of a free population contributed to the cultivation of their land those rural charms that so distinguishingly adorn our own happy island, it would be the most Eden-like place on the face of the earth.

From Catania to Taormina it is thirty miles, for which latter place we departed early on the morning of the 16th December. Our faithful muleteer, Giovanni, stood with his patient steeds at the door of the albergo at six o'clock, and we left in darkness, as we had entered, the illustrious* city and its smiling plains. The morning was surprisingly mild, and the brilliant twinklings of the starry firmament that canopied us afforded an abundance of light to guide us over the execrable unevenness of the road, which, for the first few miles, indeed as far as Aci, is intolerably bad, being nothing but a rugged hill of barren, rocky lava.

Day-break discovered to our right the little bay of La Trezza, and gave us a farewell glimpse of the fabled missiles of the cyclops. After traversing the small towns of San Gregorio and Filippo, we arrived at Aci Reale (distant ten miles from Catania), a regular built town, with an active population of thirteen thousand souls, who carry on a brisk traffic along the coast with their fruits and wines; the latter of which they export in immense quantities. The origin of the term is of great antiquity, deriving its appellation of Acis from the Grecian river of the same name, which flows a little below the town, under the more modern designation of Acque Grandi, whose waters have so often supplied the muse of poetry with a theme; they are Virgil's "golden streams of Acis;" and, besides many other beau-

* "L'illustre," the agnomen by which Catania has been designated for a series of ages.

tiful classical records of the ancients, we are indebted to them for the exquisite inspirations of Ovid, whose allusion to the rock this jealous giant threw at Acis is nothing more than a metaphorical description of the lava ejected in one of the eruptions of Ætna, which overwhelmed the river, leaving only a small stream that fell into it, called by the Greeks Galatæa, to which they, after the destruction of the others, gave the name of Acis.

The town of Aci is situated on a bold promontory of lava, nearly eight hundred feet above the level of the sea, formed by a succession of eruptions from Ætna; the last of which was the celebrated one mentioned by the ancient historians as having arrested the progress of Himilcon and his army against Dionysius in the year 369 B. C., obliging him to make the circuit of the mountain, and thereby separate himself from the co-operations of Mago's fleet, which gave rise to the naval contest before alluded to in the bay of La Trezza.

Having heard, as well as read, much concerning this great promontory of lava, I felt somewhat curious to examine it; consequently we alighted, and descended to the shore by an excellent formed road called La Scala, which is cut through the rock, and exposes seven or eight different layers of lava, interstratified with as many beds of volcanic *cinders*, (and not earth, as has been suggested in support of many philosophical opinions and wild geological speculations), which form a species of volcanic tufa, evidently without the slightest symptoms of vegetable matter ever having entered into its composition.

Aci is remarkable for an endless number of churches and convents, whose domes, turrets, and spires, towering above the town and its rocky heights, present a most picturesque appearance from the sea.

The Scala was constructed to facilitate a communication with the loading place and store-houses below, where there is a snug little harbour, formed by a projecting mass of lava, which has been levelled into a convenient molè, and is defended by the Bastion del Tocco, on the summit of the rock near the town. On ascending from the shore we remounted our mules and proceeded on our journey; the waters of the African sea lay to our right; to the left the white sparkling dwellings of the distant towns of Terranova, Zafferano, Caselle, and Milo; patches of vineyards, groves of olive and fruit trees, convents rising with their turretted fanes from the pinnacle of almost every little eminence, all sweetly reposing on the sunny bosom of Ætna's gardened side. After traversing the villages of San Leonardo and Matteo, we arrived a little past eleven at Le Giarre, the usual place of the muleteers' mid-day repose. It is a town of nearly five thousand inhabitants, and, like all the others on this side the mountain, fast improving from the industry and consequently more flourishing condition of the people. In Sicily, as in every other bigoted country, where prosperity reigns, monastic institutions increase in an equal ratio, as drones augment in proportion to the labours of the bee; therefore has Le Giarre, like Aci, to boast of the prevalence of its conventual structures and the advantage of its monkish *benedictions*. They have lately built a fine new church, besides other public buildings; and the *ci-devant* caricatore of Riposto is now become a neat, regular, modern town, whose principal street will very soon be united to Giarre. The port is defended by a battery and tower, but from its badness affords very little attraction for the resort of vessels. We entered a boat at the solicitations of a humorous son of Neptune, and plied into the offing, which furnished us with the twofold advantage of

viewing the beautiful landscape from the sea, and leisurely refreshing ourselves with an agreeable breakfast from our viaticum, which we had brought with us for that purpose to the shore.

On the height beyond Giarre, towards the north, is the famous forest of chesnut trees, and the still more celebrated monarch of that woody sphere the Castagno di Cento Cavalli; for the purpose of seeing which we deviated from the direct path and rejoined the grand *sentier* at the river Camarello, or, as it is usually called, Fiume Freddo, thus prolonging the usual day's journey nearly five miles.

Nothing can be more beautiful, more luxuriant, or more picturesque, than the chesnut trees of Mascali Vecchio; many of them measure from forty to sixty feet in circumference, with the most grotesque formed ramifications feathering to the ground, almost enveloped in an exuberance of rich foliage. The large one abovementioned, called the "Cento Cavalli," received its appellation from one of the queens of Arragon, on a visit to the mountain, having, with all her suite of horsemen, taken shelter, during a storm, within the circumference of its decayed spreading trunk: it is composed of five separated stems, standing in a circle, measuring one hundred and seventy feet round, each of which is hollowed to the core, and, being without bark on the inner side, are asserted to have been originally united into one large trunk: however, the assumption is preposterous; they are all evidently of different growth, the roots of which may be distinctly traced radiating from each through the great circle, which could not be the case if belonging to one parent stem. The whole forms a beautiful sheltered retreat; a public path leads through it, and a hut stands in the centre for the use of the people who gather the chesnuts in the season.

Descending from the hill we traversed a country richly interspersed with vineyards and mulberry trees, crossed the Fiume Freddo, and, soon after, the Alcantara, or Al Cantar of the Saracens. It is the Onobalos * of the Greeks, so called on account of the rapidity of the stream throwing down the burthened asses as they crossed; and was afterwards called, by the Romans, Asinus, for which see Appian, Strabo, and Pliny. The river meanders through a picturesque country, sometimes between high basaltic rocks, sometimes along thickly wooded banks or along narrow valleys clothed with the richest shrubs and flowers. Its reputed rapidity, however, we had no opportunity of witnessing, for the long drought had almost stilled the current of its waters.

A little beyond the opposite bank of this river a small promontory of lava stretches into the sea now called Punta Schissone, on the extremity of which stands a large battery, and an old castle called Torre Schissone, that marks the venerable site of the ancient Naxos, the first Grecian colony that was settled in Sicily, by a party of Chalcydians under Theocles, in the year 733 B. C.† Naxos attained great celebrity in the early annals of Sicilian history; it became rich and powerful, founded new towns‡, boasted many splendid temples, and, amongst them, the famous "fanum Veneris." The venerated statue of Apollo Arcagetes stood enshrined before the city gates, and it shone in all the strength and prosperity of liberty under the government of Andromachus §, whose enthusiasm in the cause of freedom urged

* Ονος asinus, and Βαλλω jaceo.

† Thucydides, lib. vi., and Cluverius.

‡ Catania and Leontium.

§ Andromachus was the father of the celebrated historian Timæus, who was born at Taormina.

him to oppose the tyranny of Dionysius, and thus brought destruction on the town*; for the incensed oppressor wreaked his vengeance by sending an army against them, which, by the treachery of Procles, entered the walls, drove out the inhabitants, and levelled the city with the earth.

Punta Schissone †, with the opposite Cape St. Andrea, (the ancient promontory of Tauros,) form a beautiful little bay, much resorted to by coasting craft whenever the wind increases from the south-west or north-west with more than the usual tranquillity of southern zephyrs. The shores of this neighbourhood are bounded by high cliffs of fine red and white marble.

After passing the bishop's statue to our left, we arrived, at four, in Giardini, a small village situated on the Lettanno Fiumara; and which, though afflicted with the pestilential effects of malaria, is preferred as a halting place by the muleteers, for the purpose of avoiding the tedious ascent of the mountain; the consequence of which is, the best accommodations are established there, and the Fortuna hotel is now become the common locanda of all travellers. Immediately on alighting from our jaded steeds we ascended the mountain, repaired, in company with a guide, to the romantic heights of Mola, and visited the splendid remains of antiquity that adorn the modern town of Taormina‡.

The road leads up by a winding path, commanding, at

* About the middle of the fourth century before Christ.

† This promontory, or point, possesses considerable classical interest. Octavius, after vainly summoning Taurominium to surrender, pitched his camp there, and lost his fleet in an action with Pompey, who, in the bay, attacked and totally destroyed it, 35 B. C.

‡ Those travellers who wish to make any stay in this country, and consequently to avoid the malaria of Giardini, may obtain better quarters, and more salutary air, at the Capuchin convent, by procuring a letter of

every turn, a variety of objects, and scenery quite enchanting to the eye; and I never shall forget the striking picture that particularly presented itself to our view as we paced round the sinuosities of the acclivity. The sun, though set to us by the intervention of Ætna's towering heights, still continued to illuminate the western side of the mountain with the golden effulgence of his declining blaze, which, reflected against an unusually broad, thick column of smoke that was at that moment issuing from the crater, gave to it the transparency and exact resemblance of a bright flame of fire, extending over the canopying firmament as far as the curling cloud retained its density, producing the most novel and curious appearance that can be well imagined; and which, blended with the romantic scenery that surrounded us, constituted a picture so inimitably enchanting as to impoverish the brightest descriptions of the pencil or the pen. Such was its electrifying effects that the rude countrymen stood enthusiastically aghast to behold the charm. But the enjoyment was of short duration; the sun sunk into the west, and left the smoky column in all the gloom of its previous impenetrable density. I could not help drawing a moral from this momentary scene of beauty, whose evanescence, like almost all our other pleasures, strongly recalled to mind the imprudence of ever reposing human happiness on the transitory joys of this world.

Taormina is situated on the ancient Mount Taurus, a high calcareous mountain * looking towards the sea, and is the

recommendation to their hospitality: it stands behind the theatre, under the projecting precipices of Mola; from its romantic gardens the amateur may revel, in retirement, over the picturesque objects that surround him.

* It is, according to Diodorus, the Mount Tauros of the ancient Greeks, celebrated for the excellence of its marble, which Hiero, Agathocles, Dionysius, and others, employed in the embellishment of their buildings.

site of that renowned city called Taurominium by the Romans, and ΤΑΥΡΟΜΕΝΟΝ by the Greeks. It was founded by Andromachus, in the year 353 B. C., who led thither the inhabitants from the ruins of Naxos, and established a fortress, which proved the commencement of future strength and greatness; hence the etymology of its Grecian name Ταυρος and Μενω.

It has been the theatre of many sanguinary contests and obstinate struggles in various ages; and its citizens were always renowned for their peculiar firmness, fidelity, and bravery. The seeds of freedom were deeply implanted in their bosoms; they aided the noble cause of the magnanimous Timoleon, who landed here with his ten vessels and a thousand men to emancipate the island and destroy the tyrannical oppressors that ruled it. They were the last to accede to the treaty of alliance with the Romans, made by Hiero II.; but when they at length yielded, ever afterwards attached themselves to the Roman interests, and, in cases of exigence, warmly espoused their cause. The town and neighbourhood became a scene of contention in the wars of the second triumvirate; the former of which was destroyed by Sextus Pompeius, but afterwards rebuilt by Octavius, richly endowed with lands, and colonized with Romans; under whom, during the prosperity of the empire, it became a city of great affluence and splendour*, embellished with theatres, aqueducts, naumachia, and temples, whose remains constitute the great attractions of the modern town.

At the commencement of the ninth century it made a

* Vide Cicero ad Verr. The Greek language continued to be spoken in its purity until this period, when the numerous bodies of Roman citizens, sent by Augustus to colonize various ruined towns of Sicily, contributed greatly to its corruption.

most obstinate resistance against the Saracens, whose revengeful cruelty and atrocities, on gaining possession, still continue to be proverbial, and are strictly recorded in the memorials of its annalists. Under the Musulmanic dominion it was strongly fortified, and became a hold of considerable importance, designated by the Saracens Al Moez, which with Syracuse were the last places in Sicily to acknowledge the yoke of the Norman conqueror. The Normans greatly increased the fortifications, re-established christianity, and founded many churches and convents; however, it was at length totally destroyed by the Venetians during their wars with Sicily in the twelfth century; since which it has never again risen to any degree of prosperity, and is now a miserable looking dirty town, with a population of not many more than three thousand sickly squalid looking inhabitants. Little more remains of the Saracenic and Norman fortifications than parts of the walls, which, in subsequent ages, have been added to, repaired, and ultimately formed in their present condition by Charles V. on account of the eligibility of the position. The castle, however, above, between Mola and the town, erroneously called Moorish, was erected by Lewis of Arragon, in the fourteenth century, for the purpose of commanding the town and its refractory inhabitants, and received the appropriate appellation of Malvicino.

Nothing can be more strikingly romantic than the whole of the scenery which encircles Taormina; all its beauty, grandeur, and sublimity, inspiring at once the opposite sensations of awe, and pleasing enthusiasm; it unites the most extraordinary combination of picturesque features that can be conceived, amply redeeming the gloomy, ungainly appearance of the modern town. The surrounding hills are clothed with rich patches of vine-

yard *, the low lands with fruit and luxuriant vegetation; the thickly wooded bosom of Ætna extends along the west; to the north-east the straights of Faro, and the distant mountains of Calabria; whilst high precipitous rocks hang perpendicularly over the town, crowned on the summit by the towering habitations of Mola and its castle, nearly at a height of seventeen hundred feet from the level of the sea; the whole girded, towards the east, by a broad sweep of azure sea that contributes perfection to this most captivating landscape.

A winding road leads up the precipice to the curiously situated little town of Mola, whose population of three hundred and seventy souls seem, to the stranger's eye, to be for ever cut off from the associations of the lower world, by its rugged and inaccessible acclivities. The adjoining castle formerly served as a place of exile and incarceration for state prisoners; but to what purpose it is now particularly devoted, besides being a military station, I could not ascertain.

The existing ruins of the ancient Taurominium, consist of a theatre, naumachia, aqueducts, reservoirs, broken sepulchres, and the unintelligible *débris* of a variety of other buildings strewed in every direction about the neighbourhood, from whence relics of every description have been found at different periods; besides Roman and Grecian coins of bronze, silver, and gold.

The theatre is one of the most splendid monuments of antiquity that is preserved to us, and is held in the highest

* The vineyards are here carefully cultivated, and produce a peculiarly delicious species of red wine, which, according to Pliny and others, ranked high in the estimation of the ancients; and at the banqueting entertainments of the Romans, was served up in rivalship with the celebrated juice of the Falernian grape.

estimation by antiquaries, on account of the beautiful symmetry of its proportions, as well as the perfect preservation of that part, namely, the stage and scena*, which in almost all other ruins of similar edifices is deficient. It is most advantageously situated on an eminence above the town, opposite Mount Ætna, commanding the luxurious prospect before described, and which the spectators had the benefit of contemplating during the dramatic interludes.

It was composed of three stories, built of pebbles and fine brick, of which latter the vaultings were constructed, the whole being encrusted with marble, and embellished with columns, pilasters, and statues. The part devoted to the actors is a parallelogram of one hundred and forty feet by sixty, from whence emanates the body of the theatre, in a beautiful elliptical curve, nearly one hundred and fifty feet in diameter, comprising three divisions of seats, capable of accommodating six thousand spectators.

The foundation only of the latter part remains, whilst the former is in a wonderful state of preservation. The scena is a thick wall, with a large door in the centre, and a smaller lateral one to the right and left, separated by three intervening niches, and one at the ends, which originally contained beautiful statues, and were decorated with Corinthian pilasters.

The proscenium is comparatively narrow, and the podion, or orchestra, small; intervening which is a subterranean vault or gallery, partly open, intended, I imagine, for the prompters. The proscenium was composed of several chambers, besides which two other divisions, at the

* The scena of the Romans was a large wall that transversely intersected the stage, and divided the proscenium from the pulpitum, where the actors stood. It was usually adorned with architectural orders, statues, &c., and contained a central with two or more lateral doors.

extremities of the scena, two stories high, communicated with the galleries of the theatre; which, altogether in its perfect state, must have constituted one of the most magnificent fabrics of the kind belonging to the ancients, whether considering its magnitude or beauty; and such is the perfection with which it has been constructed, in compliance to the rules of accoustic science, that the lowest sound of the human voice is, even in its present dilapidated state, distinctly heard round the whole theatre. How symmetrical its proportions!—how profoundly skilful the architect!

The naumachia was an ellipsis of great extent, confined by excessively strong thick walls, built by the Romans for the exhibition of sea fights and nautical exercises. What a useless expense! what a supererogatory work on the borders of a beautiful tranquil sea!

The hand of time, however, has appropriated its space to more suitable purposes: it is now clothed with vegetation, and the area occupied by an olive garden, leaving little more than a few traces of its colossal walls to mark the spot which once resounded with the joyful acclamations of forty or fifty thousand Roman spectators witnessing its aquatic sports.

At a short distance above the naumachia are the remains of several water reservoirs, the smallest only of which retains its exact form; it is composed of two basins parallel to each other, separated by eight pilasters, and supported by eighteen arches built of pebbles, strongly cemented together. The water was conveyed into them by aqueducts, which in some parts are cut out of the solid rock. The use of so many extensive reservoirs is a question that has occupied the inquiries of antiquaries, but, from their situation and magnitude, I think there can be

no doubt of their having served for the supply of the naumachia.

Although the gloom of evening rapidly increased, we again stood to gaze on the wonderful scene that encircled us. What an extensive field presents itself around this interesting country for the unlimited exercise of pictorial skill! What an intoxicating excitement it offers to the fond worshipper of Nature's charms!—unparalleled in the striking beauty of its features, as in the very rare, yet harmonious, combination of its objects, it is singularly calculated to stimulate to its highest capability the genius of the one, or to elevate to enthusiasm the admiration of the other *. Independent of which, it is full of interest to the classical reader, who, in contemplating it, will be reminded of innumerable historical events, of which it forms a most conspicuous object; in the struggles of Carthage and the

* The country alvo to the westward is particularly deserving of notice, especially towards Francavilla, which is beautifully interspersed with wild romantic objects, embosomed in splendid picturesque cultivated scenery: the country abounds with majestic chesnut trees, mingled with orange groves and olives, whilst the most interesting views present themselves on every side; amongst them a singularly fascinating one of Castiglione, and the romantic position of the Capuchin convent on the north side of the valley: it is situated on an eminence between two very picturesque rocks, surrounded by woods and evergreens, in the centre of a country memorable for that sanguinary conflict, in 1719, between the Austrians and Spaniards, which terminated by a total defeat of the former, and is minutely detailed in the MS. of the holy brethren, who, in safety, witnessed from their elevated walls the progress of the action.

The convent garden boasts a peculiar proportion of exquisite beauty, and commands a prospect that would inspire the eulogies of the most fastidious painter. The fore-ground is closed in by the finest and most elegant oaks of Sicily, and the distance terminated by the lofty form of Ætna. A fiumara traverses the bottom of the garden, whose waters during the rainy seasons rush with rumbling impetuosity along its course, and enhance the charms of pictorial effect.

Greeks; in the Punic wars; in the servile * contests, as well as those of the Triumvirate; in the Saracenic and the Norman invasions; besides during the civil dissentions of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, it was ever, from its singular locality and strength, a desirable acquisition, and consequently an object of contention amongst all parties.

It was dark ere we returned to our quarters at Giardini, which, although claiming the superiority over those of Taormina, had little to recommend them, and can only be described, according to the very appropriate mode of French comparison in similar cases, as *moins mauvais*; however, after making a comfortable repast from our basket, which we washed down with some of the celebrated red wine of the mountain, furnished by our renegado looking host, we retired to repose, and departed at five in the morning for Messina, distant thirty miles. Though no moon supplied us with the light of her silvery beams, the heavens were transparently bright, and the beauty and magnified luminous appearance of the constellations, as seen through the lucid atmosphere of these southern regions, occupied our attention and admiration until the brighter orb rose triumphant from the horizon, to the exclusion of the twinkling lights of night, unmasking to our view a fine, cultivated, thickly-inhabited country, enriched with a variety of picturesque objects. The road leads by a rugged descent to the sea shore, where it is overhung by high rocky cliffs as far as Capo Grosso. The sides of the hills are covered with olive trees, corn fields, hemp grounds, and vineyards; whilst the road is strewed with the beauti-

* The servile war, notwithstanding its short duration, was more destructive to Sicily than all the contests of the Carthaginians, or even of its more modern destroyers, the Painim infidels.

ful oleander. We traversed the almost dry beds of the fiumare Monguffi and Gallo d'Oro, from whence we ascended a rocky promontory overhanging the sea *, where the road becomes considerably contracted, and leads through a wild picturesque passage, bounded by high rocks, called the Pass of St. Alessio, which being the only direct road to Messina, is strongly fortified, and forms a commanding military position: there is a redoubt, composed on the left of a tower, turret, and wall, with loop holes, united, by a double wall, to a work on the summit of a high conical rock rising perpendicularly from the sea, consisting of a telegraph and tower, with two or three stages of platforms, surrounded by loop-holed walls.

On quitting St. Alessio we passed to the left, on the hill, the town of Forza, with its castle and church prominently towering above the rest, to announce at a distance the predominating authority of church and military law.

After crossing another small stream called Agro, we arrived at the Nisi, or, as it is more generally termed, Savoca, and according to the authority of Thucydides, the Enisus of the Romans, and Chrysorhoas † of the Greeks, which latter epithet it received on account of the quantity of gold dust washed down its bed; indeed the ancients derived considerable profit from a variety of other metallic productions its vicinity furnished, and with which the substrata are still abundantly impregnated, such as marcasite, cinnabar, lead, silver, and antimony: the last-mentioned one, however, continues to be sought for with as much profit as success; besides alum and an abundance of lapis lazuli.

* Anciently called Arginus, but now Capo St. Alessio.

† Some travellers attribute this name to the next rivulet farther north, which, however, is a mere torrent, and not known to have exhibited any symptoms of its possession of that metal.

Leaving the town of Roccalumera, and its bold romantic castle, to the left, we soon after entered Ali, which being half way, we breakfasted and refreshed our mules. It is a small town situated at the foot of the hill, containing about 1,500 inhabitants, with a small village below, on the shore, called the Marina d'Ali, particularly celebrated for its numerous and valuable mineral waters, hot and cold, saline, sulphuric, ferruginous, which are remarkable for the curious circumstance of their varying in quality and heat at the short distances of five or six feet. Such is the efficacy of these waters in innumerable corporeal afflictions, that this little place might compete with the celebrity of a Bath or Cheltenham, if it possessed accommodations suitable to the exigencies of civilized invalids. But strangers are exclusively denied all possibility of taking up their abode thither, either for health or pleasure; neither the comforts of an inn, or the luxury of a lodging-house, are inducements that exist to arrest the progress of the invalid or the man of pleasure; besides which, the places they have dignified with the appellation of baths are of such barbarous construction, and so unsuited to the feelings of a sick person, that however tempting their efficacy, no humanized patient could be persuaded to resort to the town of Ali for the restoration of health.

Whilst our steeds were preparing for departure, we were amused with the performances of a group of Calabrian harpers and pipers, who no sooner recognised us to be Inglesi than they put our liberality to the test by a powerful appeal from their instruments. They are, generally speaking, mountaineers from the remote parts of Calabria, who annually frequent this island, and the principal towns of the kingdom of Naples, as well as those of the pontifical states, six weeks previous to the festival of the nativity, for the

purpose of playing hymns of adoration and rejoicing before the various images and paintings of the Virgin and infant Jesus, that occupy and give sanctity to some part or other of almost every street in the town; for which they are paid by voluntary contributions from the different parishes, independent of liberal remunerations they receive for similar performances before all shops and coffee-houses whose interests are especially placed under the auspicious patronage of the Virgin. And such is the feeling of superstition on the subject, that a neglect of the custom would be considered the foundation of misfortune, the presage of some calamitous event.

Of the two, the harpers are the most skilful, as well as the most pleasing performers; though to the eye the pipers are the most rustic and picturesque: they are habited in coarse sheep-skins, with sandals and Spanish gaiters *; their pipes as nearly as possible resemble those of the Scotch, but more soft and harmonious, and I think less harsh in the drone. The Calabrian, however, is little calculated to compete with the skill of the Caledonian; the energetic powers of the latter inspire the followers of a M'Gregor or Duncan with the excitement of martial enthusiasm—the badly-executed devotional hymneal style of the former awakens the fervour of the idolater and the superstition of the bigot, reaching the heart only through the medium of the imagination.

Quitting Ali, we traversed the promontory of Capo Grosso, and arrived at the town and pass of Scaletta, which being well protected with a good wall and fortifications, effec-

* The Calabrian pipers are always accompanied by the inharmonious tones of another instrument somewhat resembling a rude species of clarionet, which is played by a man or boy equally habited in sheep-skins.

tually commands the passage, and is further secured by the mountains above, and the castle or tower near the shore, called Torre della Scaletta.

The coast from hence to Messina exhibits an animated scene of populous towns and villages, Grampileri, Pezzolo, Landaria, Bardonaro, Tremmisterj, Contessa, and Gazzi, whose inhabitants are industriously occupied in the cultivation of fruits, wine, and an abundance of silk. The intervening country is luxuriantly interspersed with gardens, vineyards, olive grounds, and mulberry plantations for the benefit of the silk worm, which is propagated to a considerable extent in this neighbourhood.

At four o'clock we reached Messina, and took up our quarters at the hotel of the Gran Brettagna. It is the best of the three the town affords, and we found the accommodations clean, comfortable, and, in comparison to what we had recently experienced, perfectly luxurious.

As circumstances rendered time valuable to us, we immediately proceeded with a *laquais de placé* to explore the town; but soon, however, being interrupted by the obscurity of evening, we returned to dinner, and joined the hospitable festivities of a merchant to whom we were furnished with letters of introduction. The steam-boat having arrived, our friend the Duke San Giovanni and his amiable family were of the party, which diminished considerably that unsatisfactory feeling arising from a consciousness of being total strangers in a select private circle; and aided by the hilarity peculiar to a ball-room, as well as the sociability of an unceremonious banquet, we most agreeably amused ourselves until one o'clock.

Day-light again saw us actively engaged in the pursuits of lionizing, and before our breakfast hour at eleven o'clock, we had mounted all the heights in the neighbourhood,

traversed the town in various directions, and visited many of the principal public edifices.

The history of Messina is as various as it is interesting. From the convenience of its port, and contiguity to the Italian shore, it has been the theatre of contention and invasion through a long succession of eventful ages. It was originally founded by the Sicels, or Opicians; subsequently, however, a party of Cumæan * pirates from the Grecian Negropont, coasting along the Faro, and observing the suitableness of its port and situation to their predatory practices, landed, drove out the inhabitants, and raised a new town on the present site, at the mouth of the harbour, which they called Zanklon, or Zagklon †, from the form of the port, whose curvature resembles a reaping-hook, as the name implies. Hence Herodotus, in his allusion to the place, says, "Πολιν καλλιστην Ζαγκλην."

In the course of a few years it acquired no small importance, and became a considerable city. Their unlawful and piratical pursuits, however, kept them in a constant state of ferment and dispute with their neighbours; on one occasion of which a considerable body of Samians and Ionians, who had been ruined in their wars with the Medes and Phœnicians, and coming in the neighbourhood of Zanklon with the intention of colonizing a town of their own, availed themselves of the absence of the Zankleans, treacherously seized upon the town, and enslaved the inhabitants. Providence, however, destined them soon to meet a punishment equivalent to the guilt of such treachery. Rheggium was at that period inhabited by a colony of Messinians, under the government of Anaxilas, who, tempted by the attractions of Zanklon and its locality, in company

* Pausainas and Thucidydes. † Ζαγκλον falx.

LIBRARY OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

Donne di Messina.

with another body of Messinians under Gorgos and Manticlus, whom he had invited from Greece for the purpose, crossed the Faro, attacked and took the town, which, after great bloodshed, he razed to the foundation, and built a city a mile farther south on the present site, which, in honour of his country and companions, Anaxilas named Messina, or, according to the Greek, ΜΕΣΣΑΝΙΟΝ. This happened, according to the authority of Thucidydes, Strabo, and Pausanias, about the twenty-ninth Olympiad, or six hundred and sixty years before Christ.

Anaxilas*, we learn from Herodotus, yielded the care of Rheggium to a trusty servant, and devoted his sole attention to the new city. He greatly aggrandized and adorned it, and made it the seat of government, which he conducted with prudence, mildness, and justice, at a time when almost all the other cities of Sicily were enslaved by oppressive tyrants. At his death, however, the abuse of power on the part of his successors instigated revolt, and gave rise to the establishment of republicanism. In the course of some years after, Ippas reduced it to his obedience, and exercised the most barbarous cruelties on the inhabitants, until the magnanimous Timoleon came to their relief, drove out the tyrant, and restored freedom to the city.

About two hundred and eighty years before Christ a large body of Campanian soldiers, who had been employed in the army of Agathocles, and now on their return home to Italy, were hospitably received by the Messinians, against whom notwithstanding, in an unguarded moment, these

* Anaxilas first introduced the hare into Sicily; and having gained the prize at the Olympic games, explains the characters of some of the old medals of that city, which on one side have a hare, on the reverse a chariot and steeds.

base mercenaries perfidiously rose, slaughtered many, drove out the rest, and made themselves master of the town, their wives, and property.

Secure in the possession of Messina they fortified the city, established a republican form of government, called themselves Mamertines *, and entered into a confederacy of mutual protection with the Rheggians. Their troublesome aggressions, however, on the territories of Syracuse at length obliged Hiero to form a league with the Carthaginians for the extirpation of such neighbours; on which occasion, after a humiliating defeat, the Mamertines began to think of providing for their safety: in the consideration of which a division of opinion took place, and, two parties being formed, one yielded up the citadel to the Carthaginians whilst the other retained the town and implored the aid of Rome. In spite of the injustice of such interference, and the ignominy it must unavoidably attach to the Roman nation, the senate gladly availed themselves of the plea to oppose the growing power of Carthage, consequently waved the principles of honour and justice at the instigation of those of interest and policy, and sent an army, under the command of Appius Claudius, who immediately crossed the straits, and, by his promptitude, ingenuity, and military skill, succeeded in driving out the Carthaginians, putting both armies to the route, and obtaining exclusive possession of the city †.

This was the first expedition of the Romans out of Italy, and the commencement of their celebrated wars with Car-

* The Mamertines were an extremely warlike and ferocious people, from which circumstance they assumed the appellation of Mamertines, which, in the Latin tongue, signifies martial from Mamers, Mars, or the god of war.

† Two hundred and sixty-three years before Christ.

thage. Such measures, on the part of a great state that prided itself on its virtues and dignity, could not be justified on the score of probity and honour; although, contrary to the opinions of some writers, I feel persuaded that wisdom, experience, long political foresight, and a natural dread of the increasing ambition of Carthage, warranted the adoption of some decided steps for the protection of the future interests of Rome; and we might not be at a loss for many parallel cases in the more *modern annals* of history, when society has enjoyed the superior advantage of the influence of christianity to fortify the heart against the unjust invasion of another's rights.

From this period Messina became a Roman colony, was distinguished by many peculiar privileges and indulgences, enjoyed a long interval of peace, and participated in the honours and prosperity of Rome. It is remarkable for having first beheld a Roman fleet floating on the bosom of the ocean, that fleet consisting of one hundred and thirty galleys, which were constructed in the short space of sixty days; and afterwards so celebrated for obtaining the great victory off Mylæ over the Carthaginians.

It was the theatre of contest and bloodshed between the contending parties of the last triumvirate, having espoused the cause of Sextus Pompeus, whose misfortunes threw it into the possession of Octavius and the empire. In the year 829 A. D. it fell, with the rest of Sicily, into the hands of the Saracens; but the inhabitants, inheriting the same firmness, bravery, and spirit of liberty which characterized their Roman ancestors, yielded it not to their infidel conquerors without honourable capitulation; and part of the town was assigned to the christians for the uninterrupted exercise of their own religion and laws: notwithstanding which, it was the first to throw off the yoke and aid the

cause of George Maniaces; and, in 1060, opened its gates to the brave Normans, who delivered the island from the Paynim horde*.

In the following century, about 1190, Messina is distinguished as being the winter quarters of the army of the crusaders under Philip of France and our lion-hearted Richard, which latter, exhibited a trait of his characteristic violence and impetuosity towards Tancred of Sicily, and gave rise to a scene of contention, bloodshed, and conflagration that nearly interrupted the holy cause of the cross.

Tancred, jealous of the sojourn of Richard and his English warriors, secretly instigated the Messinians to oppose the interests of the northern monarch, and oblige him, if possible, to depart from the island; in consequence of which, the inhabitants armed themselves, rose upon the English, drove them out of the town, and shut the gates; a measure that was little calculated to be viewed with patience by Cœur de Lion, who immediately laid siege to the palace, broke down the walls, set fire to the town, and put many of the citizens to the sword, and probably would have exterminated the whole population, as well as dwellings, if not pacified by the interference of Philip, and the promises of Tancred.

Messina is considerably indebted to Charles V. for many embellishments, as well as useful improvements; he fortified and surrounded it with walls after his expulsion of the Tunisians in 1535. It now begins to assume a more flourishing aspect, after the various calamities of earthquake and pestilence in the last century †, and is become

* Messina was the only town in Sicily that successfully opposed the army of Eunus in the servile war; for which, according to Livy, the inhabitants enjoyed many exemptions and favours from the Romans.

† The most disastrous of these events, were the plague of 1743, when half the inhabitants were swept away; and the dreadful earthquake of

a fine interesting town, with a population of sixty thousand inhabitants, adorned with many noble edifices, and intersected by several fine spacious streets, paved with lava; of which the principal ones are the Strada Ferdinanda, the Corso, and the Strada d'Austria. It possesses many fine churches, and is well endowed with hospitals, among which the Loggia shines conspicuous. The conventual establishments are innumerable, and some of them on a splendid scale, perched on the heights round the suburbs in some of the most delicious and captivating retreats in the world.

The cathedral is a heavy gothic structure, raised by the Normans in the twelfth century, but at the same time exhibiting in parts some of the finest and richest specimens of the pointed style of that age existing; particularly the great window and the central doorway of the façade, the latter of which is most profusely ornamented with tracery, sculptured busts, and armorial bearings, inclosed by an extremely curious porch formed of thin Saracenic pillars, richly decorated, divided into parts, and surmounted by a beautiful pointed pediment of the most fanciful and ingenious workmanship. Each side of the porch is fronted by a low spiral pillar resting on the back of a lion, above which stand four statues of saints, enshrined in highly-wrought sculptured niches one above the other, and terminated by a winged angel, whose summits are nearly upon a level with the pinnacle of the pediment, altogether constituting one of the most interesting examples of early Gothic architecture I ever saw.

1783, which threw down the splendid range of buildings that lined the Marina, and caused such general devastation, that to enable the city to recover from the calamity, the government exempted it from all commercial restrictions, and made it a free port; which privilege, however, it is hinted, is about to be withdrawn.

The interior of the church is supported by twenty-two pillars of granite, said to have belonged to a temple of Neptune at the Faro; and amongst the objects most worthy of admiration are the carved work of the choir, the high altar, which is encrusted with the most valuable *pietre dure*, splendidly inlaid, according to the richest designs of Florentine mosaic, and the sculptured pulpit by Gaggini, a work of considerable merit, and the only one that inclined me to unite in the voice of praise so indiscriminately lavished on that artist by the Sicilians.

The cathedral is consecrated to the Virgin Mary, who has been raised by some monkish trickery to the distinction of patroness of the city*; to celebrate which, the annual festival of the assumption is chosen, and is marked by all the mummery and barbarous superstitions that ever were invented to delude the human mind.

In front of the cathedral is an open space, called the Piazza del Duomo, adorned in the centre with rather a handsome fountain, representing emblematical figures of the four great rivers, supporting other allegorical groups, in a good style of sculpture. It was erected, together with several others, in the middle of the sixteenth century, to

* The circumstance which gave rise to such adoption was a monkish legend to the following effect:—"St. Paul, arriving at Messina, was persuaded to return to Jerusalem, with an embassy from the city to the Virgin Mary, which, being favourably received, he brought back an answer to the citizens, written by herself in Hebrew, accompanied with a lock of hair, the former of which was lost during the Saracenic invasion, but restored in 1467 by a Greek monk in a Latin copy, which is to this day preserved in the treasury of the cathedral, whilst the lock of hair constitutes one of the sacred relics of the chapel on the left of the altar; and such is the superstitious credulity of the great bulk of the Messinese, that whoever doubts the fact is denounced as a heretic and infidel. I need not, I presume, comment either on the historic inaccuracy respecting St. Paul, or the absurdity of such a palpable imposition.

supply the town with pure water, which is conveyed by aqueducts from Cammari, two miles to the southward.

From this piazza, the street of the Quattro Fontane* intersects the town, terminating at the west with a quarter, called Terra Nuova, the arsenal, and Don Blasco's battery.

Of the churches in Messina it may be remarked, in general, that there is very little to be admired in the architecture; though many of them being, according to Neapolitan taste, heavily ornamented, and tawdry in their interior, constitute great objects of boast amongst the natives, but claim little attraction in the eye of a stranger. After the cathedral, the church of St. Gregorio is more deserving of notice than the rest; it is richly encrusted with beautiful marbles, and possesses one or two well-executed paintings.

The church in the Piazza San Giovanni, of the Blessed Virgin, or, as it is sometimes termed, Della Graphia, is remarkable for being the last and only sanctuary in the island for the performance of the Greek liturgy†, but on account of the papal interference, it partakes now more of the Latin than the Greek rites.

The Messinese are very devout, and being fond of religious ceremonies, the church festivals are productive of innumerable sacred processions, full of pageantry and pagan-like pomp. The most popular is the festival of the assumption, the celebration of which has been for some years remitted from its usual period, to the month of

* So called from the four fountains that adorn the angles, caused by an intersecting street, about half way up.

† Roger, the first king of Sicily, in the twelfth century, established and endowed the Greek episcopal see in Messina, for the benefit of the remaining professors of that liturgy, and appointed a supreme director, under the denomination of the Protopapa, who is now chosen by the Pope, and confirmed by the bishop of Messina.

August, and it is now called the Festa del Barra, from the gorgeous machine of that name, which, like the car of Sta. Rosalia, at Palermo, constitutes the most attractive part of the puppet-show. It stands between forty and fifty feet high, embellished with angels, clouds, cherubims, and a variety of other objects, grouped up to typify the assumption of the Virgin; all of which is surmounted by a blasphemous incorporation of the Almighty, in the human form, holding forth a tawdrily decorated female figure, intended to represent the soul of the Virgin. The parts which form the centre, namely, a bright radiated sun, and blue globe, studded with golden stars, are kept in motion, by revolving machinery, as the procession moves along the streets; whilst, on the platform of the base, the apostles are personated by twelve Messinese children, surrounded by a choir chaunting hymns over the tomb of the Virgin. A band of music, with religious as well as military banners, precedes this holy pageant, accompanied by all the constituted authorities of the city in full costume, followed by nearly the whole population of Messina. The celebration of this fete lasts three days, during which other public processions and exhibitions take place, commemorative of several auspicious events in the history of Messina, namely, the expulsion of the Saracens, the arrival of corn during an alarming period of famine, &c.

Pedestrian and equestrian statues, in either bronze or marble, of the various sovereigns that have held dominion over the city, every where abound; but such is the poverty of their execution that the mind of the spectator does not hazard being seduced from the contemplation of the regal characters they are intended to represent, by the excellencies and superior attractions of the artist's skill.

As to antiquities, Messina boasts none worthy of being

named or observed, though, like all other great cities of the island, it has doubtless had its temples, its theatres, and baths; but, independent of those general causes of annihilation—viz. the successive convulsions of war, conflagration, and earthquake, from its desirable position as a place of residence, for commercial pursuits, or a fortification, all the sites sacred to the classical reader have been built upon, and the antiquated materials converted to the purposes of modern use or ornament: however, the want of interest to the antiquarian is amply redeemed by the splendour of its romantic situation, and the exquisite beauty of its scenery; neither is it destitute of classical recollections; it is enobled by glorious achievements, and associated with important events. Like the beautiful features of a fair woman, which acquire more durable attractions, through the medium of intellectual expression, so do the pictorial charms of Messina receive unbounded animation though the soul of history, and of poetry. Memory and imagination light up the scene and diffuse a brilliant halo over every height and object round the town, as well as the classic and enchanting straits of the Faro; and as long as ths records of Polybius, Livy, and Diodorus, or the harmonious strains of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid, continue to adorn and enlighten the mind of the traveller, he cannot fail to view, with peculiar feelings of pleasure and enthusiasm, the surrounding localities of this place.

The city is situated on the borders of the Faro, stretching in an oblong form along shore, girt by a beautiful undulation of picturesque hills and mountains, whose sides are spangled with casinos, churches, and palaces, the summits of which are crowned with convents*, forts, and castles;

* One of the most interesting convents, is that of the Capuchins, situated on an agreeable elevation above the town, near Spanish battery, to

amongst the latter, Gonzaga, Castellacio, and Matagriffone*; the smoking pinnacle of Mount Ætna towering above all in the back ground, and giving the most exquisite finish to this combination of striking features.

On the opposite shore across the straits rise, in lofty grandeur, a bold chain of the Calabrian mountains, with the town of Rheggio† at their base to the south, and the fabled rock of Scylla to the north. From the mountainous shores of these two coasts being opposed, east and west, the sun rises over one and sets behind the other, throwing each alternately into light and shade; and when the lovely scenery of the Sicilian side is illuminated by the first blaze of a morning sun, whilst the individualities of the Calabrian acclivities, yet reposing in their twilight gloom, are only rendered here and there visible by the partial rays of reflected light from the intervening waters of the Faro, it exhibits one of the most harmonious contrasts, and one of the richest scenic subjects in the world, most singularly calculated to inspire the painter's genius, and to triumph over his brightest efforts of imagination.

which a good winding road affords easy access; the edifice is composed of two quadrangles of cloisters, the interiors of which are adorned with orange tree s, shrubs, and flowers.

* The tower of Matagriffone is said to have been constructed by Cœur de Lion, during his sojourn and contentions with the Messinese. The position might have been occupied by him and fortified; but his short stay in the vicinity renders the building of such a tower doubtful.

‡ From Messina to Rheggio it is about seven miles, and it is worthy of being visited, on account of the beauty of its locality, as well as its ancient celebrity. According to Diodorus, it was founded by a colony of Greeks, who gave it the appellation, from the supposition that its site was once united to Sicily, but broken asunder by earthquake, (ῥηγνυμι to break). It is beautifully situated on the shore, surrounded by rocky heights and fruitful valleys, luxuriantly adorned with the fig, the date, palm, and every species of agrumi. It inspired the lays of Ariosto, and the pencil of Salvator Rosa, both of whom fondly dwelt there, and stored their minds with the rich imagery of nature.

I never shall forget the exquisite pleasure and delight I experienced when first introduced to the contemplation of this matchless panorama, the morning after our arrival in Messina. We stood by the side of an interesting Norman ruin called Castel Guelfonio, situated on a picturesque eminence above the town; not a breath was stirring, all was silence in the city that lay beneath us; for the hours are late, and the inhabitants, like the rest of the Sicilians, inactively disposed; not a sound vibrated through the air, excepting an occasional tinckling of the numerous convent bells around, announcing to the cowled tenantry of these gloomy abodes the hour of their morning orisons. A Neapolitan frigate, and a few merchant vessels bound to the Levant, lay helplessly floating on the becalmed bosom of the Faro, rocking only to the motion of the rippling tide; when, suddenly, the sun rose from behind the Calabrian heights, diffusing such a blaze of golden splendour on every object that encircled us, that we felt at once inspired with reverence for the greatness of its divine author, and electrified by the effects of such matchless beauty!—the loneliness of our situation, and the stillness of nature that prevailed around, doubly disposed us to the deeply wrought fruition of the moment; but our time was marked, and, quitting the attractive spot, we passed on and descended into the city.

The port of Messina is one of the safest, the most spacious, and commodious, for commercial pursuits, in the island, and would conveniently afford shelter for the whole navy of Europe. It is nearly four miles in circumference, formed by a narrow tongue of land called the Braccio di San Raniero, stretching out from the southern extremity of the city, in the shape of a sickle, towards the north, at

which point a strong fort, called St. Salvatore *, guards, in conjunction with the opposite battery of Porta Reale, the entrance of the harbour; between which and the citadel stands the lighthouse, and near it, an excellent insulated lazzaretto, where vessels go through the disagreeable ceremonies of quarantine, the laws of which, here, as in all parts of Sicily, on account of the calamities they have suffered from pestilence, are most scrupulously rigid.

There is a depth of thirty fathoms nearly all round the haven, and vessels load and discharge close to the merchants' stores along the Marina, where they may be supplied with fresh water from the fountains.

The citadel, which commands the town and port at the south end, was constructed by Charles II. to keep in subjection the Messinese, who were in constant rebellion against his authority. It is a formidable work, and, though strong in itself, is not, from its situation, conformable to the tactics of the modern engineer, since a fortified post on any of the neighbouring heights would most effectually ensure its destruction. It received considerable additions and improvements under our engineers in the year 1812, when the British were defending the island against the invasions of Murat; but it can never possess that requisite, which, in my opinion, is essential to the character of a citadel, namely, of being able exclusively to command the whole town. A covert way connects it with the battery of the lighthouse.

The channel which separates Sicily from Italy is called the Strait, or, more generally speaking, the Faro of Mes-

* So called from being the site of a church raised by Roger, the Norman, and consecrated to the saviour of the world, because he first landed there in safety with his army for the invasion of the Saracens.

sina: the latter though an appellation originally confined to the lighthouse which stands there, being now, from vulgar custom, applied to the whole passage. It is classically immortalized, and distinguished by being the scene of Ulysses' misfortunes; and the still applied denomination of Scylla and Charybdis will not fail to animate every traveller who stands upon its shores with the recollections of those sublime poetical descriptions and beautiful fabulous imagery of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid.

The narrowest part of the channel is at the northern entrance, where it is three miles between Ganziri and Point Pezzo, and three miles and a half between the rock of Scylla and Faro Point; and the captivating scenery exhibited to a vessel sailing through the straight, which is eighteen miles in length, surpasses any thing of the kind probably in the world.

Charybdis *, to which has been attached so many horrors by the poetical exaggerations and fictions of the ancients, is a little to the southward of the port of Messina. It is a powerful eddy, or re-action of the current, caused by some irregularities in the formation of the submarine rocks, from whence the waters, (meeting with opposition), rebound with considerable velocity, and occasion at some periods (when the current, from high winds or lunar influence, is strong), a rotatory action like a whirlpool; it is said to have been infinitely more violent previous to the earthquake of 1793; and I can very easily imagine, that to the small, rude species of vessel navigated by the early ancients, it may have presented intimidating perils, which, described in the imagery of poetical language, will render the pic-

* Charybdis first received its appellation from the Greeks, which in their language imports the properties for which it is celebrated, and is derived from Χαιτω hio, and Ροιϐδω sorbeo.

tures * pourtrayed by the ancients not so fabulous as the moderns seem generally inclined to imagine.

It is not, however, totally divested of its dangers in the present day; for small craft, approaching too near in light winds, are still liable to be drawn by its currents, and cast upon the Fangdora shoals. It assumes its most formidable appearance under the influence of a descending current from the north; hence the acquisition of the denomination by which it is most generally distinguished in the present day, namely, the "Calafaro," which has been misnamed, misinterpreted, and explained in the most absurd manner possible by a variety of tourists, who have alternately called it Calogero, Garofalo, and Calofero, annexing to each, the ingenious discovery of some Grecian derivations.

When the stream is running to the south, the Messinese mariners say, "Cala il faro," the tide or faro is running down; at which time the eddies of Charybdis being most affected, it has given rise to the corruption and application of the expression to the eddy itself. Consequently, for a series of ages, Charybdis has been called the Calafaro, or the running down of the stream.

We took a boat from the isthmus after breakfast, and pulled across this once-dreaded vortex, but, as the mariners observed to us, it was during one of the most tranquil periods of the current; therefore being unable to witness any thing more than a common reaction of the stream, we rowed round St. Salvadore, and landed at the north end of the town, where we walked about the suburbs to see a variety of picturesque objects and sites, which receive additional beauty from the rich and luxuriant productions of the vege-

* Vide *Hom. Od.* 12; *Silius Ital.* 14, *Ovid in Ibin de Ponto*, 4; and *Virg. Æn.* 3.

getable world. The aloe* grows here to an enormous elevation, which, with its majestic pyramidal flower stem, affords a peculiar ornament, when, in combination with other foliage, it becomes the neighbour of some architectural object. The pomegranate is uncommonly fine, as well as abundant, about here, the flowers being nowhere equalled for either their magnitude, splendid colour, or odoriferous scent; and the oleander, which with us is a tender plant, grows with a profusion and richness that is quite surprising, in the most sterile and otherwise unproductive-looking spots that can be imagined. Indeed vegetation in general is most fruitful and exuberant, which contributes so greatly to the embellishment of the front grounds of every scene a painter might select for his picture around this country.

To the draftsman no place can present such attractions for the improvements of his art as the environs of Messina: a thousand little excursions amongst the hills, particularly towards Rametta† and La Rocca will furnish

* The traveller through Sicily will observe the aloe to be of very common growth all over the island. Like the Indian fig, it is easily propagated, and employed to make hedge-rows, which, in the course of two or three years, assume a formidable appearance, and are impenetrable to man or beast. It is the *agave americana* of Linnæus, the leaves of which are terminated by a sharp black spine; they grow out in bushy suckers from the base, with a thick vigorous flower-stem shooting up from the centre, which rises to a height of from fifteen to thirty-five feet, and comes to perfection in the space of from three to six years. When it is in full bloom nothing can exceed its majestic beauty; it forms a splendid floral pyramid, with clusters of greenish yellow flowers at every joint up to the summit, a succession of which is continued for three or four months, after which the stem falls, and is employed in garden fences, &c.

† Rametta is an old dilapidated town, most picturesquely situated on the summit of a high isolated mountain of rock; it is walled round, and has a ruined castle of Saracenic construction, and appears quite inaccessi-

him with innumerable romantic subjects, and the richest pictorial embellishments.

The fiumaras in the neighbourhood leading to the mountains are inexpressibly rich in scenic beauty; they almost all afford a variety of splendid points of view, their banks are covered with vineyards, orange grounds, and mulberry plantations, everywhere interspersed with the rude tenements of the cultivators. Amongst the most striking are those called Castellaccio and Melazzo: at the head of the former stand the picturesque remains of a Norman castle, known by the appellation of the Abazia, having been converted into a convent and church devoted to the Virgin (since destroyed by fire); it is embosomed in a magnificent retirement, surrounded by hills, with a most romantic approach. The latter is peculiarised for its fantastic windings, which have attached to the ascent, the epithet of the cork-screw mountain, every turn of which developes to the eye a picturesque prospect, embellished with the richest details of a fore-ground. In the luxuriant solitudes also of *these fiumare* the Messinese build their casinos, or country villas, which constitute the most striking objects for the pencil in the sequestered dells formed there, and adorned by the hand of nature; they are lightly constructed, for the purpose of avoiding the dangers attending earthquakes, to which they are subject, and consist but of two stories, surrounded with beautiful gardens, and immersed in the shade of fine tall trees, whose spreading branches protect them from the heats of a mid-day sun.

The climate of Messina is most exquisitely delightful,

ble, being surrounded by several high perpendicular mountains. It is evidently the site of some habitation of the ancients, there being still the remains of extensive baths, particularly in the gardens of the Capuchin convent, where also a curious grotto is shown.

and more suited to the general purposes of health than any place in the globe. Its summer heats are tempered by its contiguity to the sea, and the refreshing breezes that blow from the Neptunian mountains, which not only bring with them luxurious coolness, but ventilate and purify the atmosphere of the city and its vicinity.

The commerce of Messina exhibits somewhat more of the bustle and activity of business than Palermo. Silk is the staple commodity of exportation, the worm being propagated to a considerable extent all round the neighbourhood, much according to the same plan adopted in the north of Italy.

The eggs are kept in warm rooms for the purpose, with merely small longitudinal apertures for the admission of air, until the latter period of incubation, which process is accelerated by women, who carry them in flannel in their bosoms during the day, and at night deposit them in a warm part of their beds, which ceremony is repeated until the worm breaks forth, when they are fed on mulberry leaves; and it is almost incredible to hear the quantity they devour before they attain the size and strength necessary for enveloping themselves in their curious silken balls.

CHAPTER X.

In the afternoon of the 17th of December, having discharged our muleteer and steeds, we bade adieu to the enchanting shores of Messina, and embarked on board the Real Ferdinando steam-boat for Palermo. The weather was louring, but a vessel full of passengers urged departure, and skimming rapidly from the sickle-formed haven, we shot past the fort of San Salvador, and launched into the Faro before two o'clock. The landscape is embellished with every charm on the Sicilian side, from Messina to the point of Faro, from whence it is distant twelve miles; besides the Palazzo Paradiso, the convent of San Salvador, and the beautiful church of La Grotta, the shore is lined with villages, and adorned with hills, here and there striated with gullies, formed by the fiumare, that wash from the heights during the rains.

The convent of San Salvador stands immediately on the shore, and was, during the protection of the English, converted into a military post, as also was the church of the Grotta, which is similarly situated farther north, and forms an object of great ornament on the borders of the sea; it is approached by a flight of three steps, and surrounded by an elegant circular colonnade, with a beautiful little dome, surmounted by a lanthorn or cupola. The buildings at the side are the remains of the barracks that were occupied by the English soldiers.

At half-past three we reached the northern extremity of the straits, and were suddenly surrounded by a fleet of fishing boats, whilst two or three vessels, bound to Palermo,

making a hopeless resistance against a head wind and lee stream, seemed to look with envy on the independence of our vaporous powers. The classic Scylla to the right, and the celebrated Pelorus of the ancients to the left, aided in warming up our imaginations at the farewell view of these interesting regions, which all the passengers appeared occupied in contemplating with the same feeling of unanimous enthusiasm, as if beholding for the last time the scenes of their youthful pleasures.

Scylla, so famous in antiquity for the fearful dangers it presented to the untaught navigators of those ages, is a bold rock, about two hundred feet high, forming the termination of a small rocky promontory, which projects a short distance into the sea from the western extremity of Calabria. On the seaward side it exhibits a three-forked cliff, with a variety of caverns and detached rocks at the base, on which the western current from the Tyrrhene sea sets at times with considerable impetuosity; consequently was the scene of many disastrous shipwrecks amongst the early mariners of the Greeks, who, inexperienced in the laws that influenced tides and currents, were unconsciously drifted with their light barks against its rugged sides. The Greeks first applied the epithet, by which it has ever since been distinguished, from the circumstance of numerous sea dogs* (called in Greek Σκυλια), frequenting the rocks and caverns at its base; and it has been the subject of most beautiful poetical descriptions from the pens of various ancient writers, but particularly of Homer† and Ovid, which, though clothed in the poetic garb of metaphor, perfectly delineate the characteristics of the rock. The classic traveller will experience no difficulty in recognising the "horrid jaws, the

* The *phoca vitulina* of Linnæus.

† See Odessey, 12th; Ovid Metamor, 14.

rows of teeth, the deformed feet, and the hideous roar" described by the Mœonian bard; in the denticulated form of the cliffs, the gaping caverns, the many rocks round its base, and the hollow roar of waves surging in the cavities during a gale; which, with the many maritime disasters it occasioned to adventurers cotemporary with Ulysses, naturally inspired the mariner's dread, as it did the poet's animated narrative, of perils that were then real, though now rendered illusive by experience, as well as science, and the improvement of nautical skill.

It is absurd to give a literal interpretation to the poetical narrations of the ancients; besides, what would become of the beautiful mythological compositions of the Greeks, all of which may be satisfactorily explained, as being the faithful, though figurative, descriptions of historical facts.

The Grecian appellation is now modernised into Sciglio; a large castle and fort crown the summit, forming a beautiful and conspicuous object to the eye of the spectator approaching from the Faro; and a town of the same name stretches its houses and streets in picturesque form from the heights of the adjacent rocks to the shore beneath. The earthquake of 1783 caused dreadful havoc at this town, as well as the neighbouring parts of the coast *. It seriously damaged several churches, split the walls of the castle, and hurled the turrets down upon the town, crushing to death several hundred persons in the fall. The Prince of Sciglio, with upwards of two thousand of his townsmen, alarmed at the first shock, fled to the beach for protection, where, in fancied security, they lay immersed in a profound sleep during the night, when suddenly the promontory of Cam-

* This most calamitous earthquake occurred on the 3d of Feb. 1783, when it is said upwards of forty thousand persons were destroyed on the two shores that suffered from its dire effects.

pala fell into the sea, forcing the waters over to the shores of the Faro, from whence they rebounded with redoubled violence, and by their resilition, overwhelmed every soul that stood within several hundred yards of the beach of Sciglio.

The high mountains which overhang, and form the beautiful back ground of Messina, gradually recede from the shore as you approach the north end of the straights, and terminate in a low sandy point, anciently called the promontory of Pelorus, but, in more modern times, the Faro point, which forms the north-eastern extremity of Sicily. It is a low green point with a yellow beach, on which is erected a pharos*, or light-house, (hence its modern name) for the navigation of the straights. It is defended by strong batteries, and two Martello towers, with a telegraph above, and a small rude village in the neighbourhood, which, from the parent tower, assumes the name of Faro. On the low flat part there is a large lake, communicating with the sea by a narrow channel, which was enlarged and deepened during the occupation of the English, for the purpose of admitting the flotilla of observation; works were thrown up for their defence, under the protection of which the boats lay in perfect security, when pursued by a superior force or during bad weather. The lake is still celebrated as of old, for the abundance and excellence of its eels. The promontory of Pelorus is celebrated in the events of ancient history; it is familiar to the ear of every classic reader as associated with the successive struggles of Carthage, Rome, or Greece; as witness to the humiliating flights of Hannibal and of Pompey, it must ever be rendered interesting as it is memorable.

* Pharos is applied, by the moderns, to a light-house, from the name of the island on which the first building, appropriated to that purpose, was erected by Ptolemy Philadelphus

As we cleared the straits and got round the Point of Faro, the wind headed us from the north-west, which, freshening at intervals, considerably impeded our progress, and before the approach of night it blew a regular gale. The sea, so tranquil and serene before sun-set, now presented a surface covered with foam, swelling into mountain billows that burst every instant over the vessel, and which, at midnight, (having got from under the lee of the Lipari islands), increased so tremendously without our being able to make the slightest progress, that we were reduced to the necessity of bearing up for Melazzo. The thunder rolled in reverberating peels along the heavens, accompanied with vivid flashes of lightning that illuminated the whole horizon, and rendered the range of Liparis perfectly distinguishable; which, combined with the fiery vomitings hissing at intervals from the crater of Stromboli, constituted as awful and imposing a night scene as the most inventive imagination could depict.

We reached Melazzo about eight o'clock in the morning, and considered the gale auspicious to our classical researches, having scarcely quitted Messina ere we repented passing so interesting a part of the coast. Every one of course immediately quitted the steam-boat with the idea of making a comfortable breakfast on shore, after a most miserable night spent on the boisterous billows; but all were disappointed by the filth, wretchedness, and scarcity of food, of the only tenement dignified with the unappropriate epithet of Albergo, and we unanimously returned to go through the ceremonies of our morning's meal at the more hospitable board of the Real Ferdinando, previous to exploring the localities of terra firma.

Melazzo is situated at the bottom of a sandy gulph of the same name, formed by Cape Bianco, which is the

extremity of a long narrow promontory stretching from the town to the sea), and Cape Rasaculmo; a battery and light-house crown the former, whilst the latter is surmounted by a Norman castle and telegraph.

Than Melazzo, probably no place on the northern coast of Sicily has been more eminently distinguished by those memorable events that are calculated to perpetuate the interest and recollections of antiquity; twice it has seen the fate of Rome decided off its port; and has been the theatre of many bloody broils and contests. It is the Melas of the Greeks, which, according to the authority of Strabo* and others, was colonized by the Zankleans, who named it after the adjoining river†; a temple of Diana once stood on its banks, and the neighbourhood was fabulously celebrated as the resort of the oxen of the sun, by Seneca, Ovid, and Homer.

By the Romans the town was called Mylœ, by which name it holds a most conspicuous place, and awakens considerable interest in the annals of their history. It is celebrated for the famous victory gained over the Carthaginians by the Consul Duilius, in the first maritime attempts of Rome 259 B. C.

Hannibal, in the celebrated septirem galley of Pyrrhus, commanded the Carthaginian fleet, consisting of one hundred and thirty sail, and hearing of the Roman squadron under Duilius being out, quitted the island of Hiera, where he then lay, and pursued the enemy with the certainty of conquest if he had the good fortune to fall in

* Lib. vi.

† This river is still distinguished by its ancient name, which was so called by the Greeks, on account of the remarkable darkness of its waters; a peculiarity still visible in many of the springs about the neighbourhood, as well as the river.

with them. A few hours favoured the wishes of the hero of Carthage, and the fleets met off Milœ, where the Romans, to the astonishment of Hannibal, firmly awaited his attack, and, by the assistance of their new invented engine, called the corvus, grappled the light barks of their opponents as they came up, fought hand to hand, and, by their superior valour, succeded in obtaining a most decisive victory* over the experienced veterans of Hannibal, who fled precipitately through the Faro, with a loss of eighty vessels taken or destroyed.

Mylœ was also the scene of warfare during the animosities of the turbulent triumvirate of Octavius, Lepidus, and Antony; when the younger Pompey, after experiencing many reverses, determined, at length, to decide the contest by a naval battle, to which he challenged his rival and competitor, Octavius; who gladly availed himself of the opportunity, and consigned the command of the fleet to Agrippa. The action was fought in this bay, 35 B. C., in the presence of the two armies; during which the hills and shores resounded with the shouts of encouragement, and ultimately with the joyful acclamations of the one, and the cries of grief of the other. Agrippa, after a long and doubtful struggle, at length routed and totally destroyed the fleet of the unfortunate Pompey, who saved himself by flight in a small boat to Messina; thus yielding to his competitor the mastery of the sea, and dominion over the future empire of Rome.

The Saracens, too, gained a decisive victory in the bay

* As a reward for this victory, the Senate decreed Duilius a triumph; and to commemorate the event, a splendid naval column was erected in the Forum, which was standing in Pliny's time; and after lying many centuries buried in the ruins caused by the barbarous hordes, was again found, with its inscription, in the year 1560.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
LIBRARY
BOMBAY
BRANCH

Pastore de Bogaria.

over the fleet of Bazilius, previous to the total submission of the island to the army of the infidels, in the year 830. In the year 1727 an Austrian army landed at Melazzo for the conquest of the island, and was saved, after their defeat at Francavilla, by a British fleet that embarked and carried them away; and in the year 1813 (the island being then under the protection of England) it was in the possession of a British garrison, and became a naval station for the surveillance of Murat's movements on the coast of Calabria.

The promontory of Melazzo is a high, bold, rocky neck of land, stretching nearly two miles into the sea, with the modern city situated on the summit of its southern extremity, whose churches, convents, and fortress, exhibit a most formidable exterior, and constitute a remarkably fine picturesque object when viewed from the bay.

The city possesses few internal merits to attract the eye, though, from the natural strength of its site, it is admirably calculated for a military post, and, by the skill of the engineer, I feel persuaded might be rendered perfectly impregnable *. The fortification was strengthened and modernized into its present form by Charles V. It is surrounded by a strong wall and bastions, defended by a large Norman castle on the heights and the fort San Elmo below; near the latter are the health-office and a Carmelite convent, and near the former stands, in a beautiful situation, a Capuchin convent, immersed in the shade of a most splendid group of pines; it has a cryptic conservatory for the departed brothers of the cowl, and possesses a range of walks,

* The isthmus that unites the projecting promontory is low and level, without any obstacle to prevent the whole fortification being doubly strengthened by cutting a dyke across, and insulating the heights of Melazzo; a work that would be neither attended with much labour or expense. Frederick II. planned the execution of it, and had already commenced when circumstances obliged him to discontinue.

parterres, and gardens, well furnished with agrumi and other luxurious fruits of the south.

The promontory from thence is richly cultivated and interspersed with vineyards, pasturage, and corn fields, secured from maritime incursions by the precipitous rocks of granite which surround the shores; it was called the Aurea Chersonesus by the ancients.

There is a lower town situated outside the walls, on the shore of the low neck of land that connects the promontory with the main; it is more regular than the other, with by no means badly constructed houses, but, from their filthy, unornamented state, and the poverty of the inhabitants, it presents to the stranger's fancy the most sickening and forbidding picture of a place of human habitation that can be imagined.

What a striking contrast between the poverty of art and the exuberant riches of nature does this miserable abode exhibit, in comparison with the luxuriance of the country by which it is surrounded! We might justly suppose it had never yet emerged from the deplorable abasement and distress into which, during the days of antiquity, it had been plunged by the predatory visit of the blood-thirsty, rapacious Agathocles.

The only object of boast to which the attention of the visitor is directed, by the wretched-looking tenants of modern Mylæ, is the fountain of Melas, whose limpid streams flow from a gloomy, badly executed group of sculpture, intended as an allegorical representation of the presiding deity of the neighbouring river. The purity of the water is its greatest recommendation, and, like all the springs in the vicinity, it flows considerably more abundantly in the summer than the winter.

Behind the town may still be seen the English lines,

outworks, and barracks, which accommodated nearly five thousand men during their occupation, and whose visit and good fellowship the natives seem to revert to with no small pleasure, having, during their sojourn, experienced considerable advantage in the sale of supplies, which, combined with the well-regulated, subordinate conduct of the troops, lent an animation to the place, and tended, in some measure, to the temporary amelioration of their condition. Now, all is deserted; the tenantless mansions of the soldiers are fast falling into dilapidation, and the solitude is marked alone by the melancholy murmurings of the ocean beating on its pebbled shore.

Our arrival at Melazzo entirely changed our plan of operations; we now determined to visit the Lipari islands, consequently hired a speronara, with four robust looking tars, and a couple of latteen sails; and the weather clearing up about noon we replenished our viaticum and bade adieu to the Real Ferdinando.

The wind had moderated to a delightful breeze from the south-west, and as we proposed first touching at Stromboli our course was north, and we went away with a flowing sheet, skimming more rapidly over the sea than I conceived, from the peculiar build of our bark, came within the sphere of its sailing capaities.

The Lipari or Æolian Islands lie in a group situated in the Tyrrhene Sea, between twenty and thirty miles north of Sicily, to which place they have generally been annexed, and whose fate and fortunes they have successively been doomed to participate from the remotest periods of antiquity. To the archaiologist they must awaken considerable interest, from the conspicuous place they held in the annals of antiquity, where we find them inhabited long anterior to

the great events of the Trojan war. They are of submarine volcanic formation, and no part of the world, probably, displays a finer field for the geologist's and the mineralogist's study of the characteristic phœnomena and products of the volcano. One or the other furnishes all that is wonderful and curious, or that may be considered desiderata to the scientific explorer. Craters totally extinct, surrounded by heaps of matter ejected at periods far beyond the reach of history, covered here and there with the beautiful verdure of luxuriant shrubs and trees that have sprung up from the pulverized lavas, and many centuries gone have shed their delicious fruits over the former bed of the fiery flood; others, partially exhausted, though still groaning with subterranean convulsions, and immersed in the smoke of sulphureous vapours, with boiling streams, oozing from a thousand pores, impregnated with the mineral ingredients of the ignited matter beneath; whilst the incessant emissions of Stromboli furnish all the wonderful peculiarities and powers of a burning mountain in its active state. They exhibit every species of lava that is known, in all the most beautiful forms and varieties; compact and porpheritic, enclosing the finest crystalizations of felspar, shoerl, and hornstone; curious breccias and basaltic specimens; vitrified, such as obsidians and enamels; pumices, from the hardest to the lightest and most subtle yet discovered; together with all the varieties of ferruginous and argillaceous cinders, converted into compact or friable tufas.

All the islands are uniformly steep, and almost inaccessible on the western shores, shelving gradually towards the east, with an isolated rock of lava on the north, many of them having immense caverns of the most singular and fantastic formation: however, on account of the extremely

absorbent qualities of the volcanic soil, there is a great deficiency of water, which obliges the general use of cisterns for the preservation of the rain waters.

The climate is remarkable for its extreme mildness and salubrity, consequently the inhabitants are a fine hardy race of people; though in some of the islands, from the filthy and habitual neglect of their persons, frequently afflicted with itch and other cutaneous diseases.

The first mention we have of these islands being inhabited and regularly governed, is when Liparus, son of Asonius, King of Italy, having quarreled with his brothers, came over here with a party of adherents, and built a city, which he called after his own name; and annexed to his dominions the whole of the islands. Hence the origin of the appellation of Liparis. Some years subsequently, Æolus, the son of Hippotas*, landing there in one of his maritime excursions, in the time of the Trojan war, was amicably received by Liparus, who gave to him his daughter in marriage†, and at whose death devolved upon him the dominion of the islands, which he materially improved, and after a reign of justice and liberality, raised to considerable importance. From him the islands were called Æolides, and himself metaphorically styled king or god of the winds, on account of the incessant gusts and aerial convulsions that prevailed within the precincts of his volcanic dominions; hence all the mythological traditions and figurative allusions of the poets.

The islands are still remarkable for the prevalence of irregular atmospheric motion, which is explained by that great natural cause which regulates aerial motion in all its

* Hence Ovid's frequent allusion to the islands, under the appellation of Hippotades.

† Pliny.

varied forms, namely, cold air rushing in to equalize a more rarified medium; for, according to the laws of statics, we know the more ponderous and cooler particles of air are always in motion towards the lighter or more heated, until a perfect equilibrium is restored.

Hence, then, the constant succession of calms, storms, sudden gusts, and variable winds the mariner is subject to when navigating these seas*; for such is the heat of vapours emitted from the ignited volcanic matter underneath the different islands from time to time, combined with the incessant irruptions of Stromboli, that the cold air of the contiguous regions is frequently rushing in with impetuous violence to moderate the heated temperature; thus occasioning those atmospherical changes that have ever characterised the neighbourhood of the Liparis.

After the death of Æolus and his various descendants, a colony of Cnidians and Rhodians settled there†, obtained possession of the islands, and fitted out a fleet to keep in subjection the Etruscans, whose predatory incursions proved a considerable annoyance to their new colony, but whom they ultimately banished from the seas, carrying on themselves a system of piracy, the profits of which were devoted to the support of the republic, with the exception of a proportion retained for the propitiation of their gods.

Under the Greeks these islands assumed great importance; they raised towns and adorned them with public edifices and temples, the principal one of which was consecrated to Vulcan, and gave rise to the appellation of Ephes-

* So great is the volcanic heat at times, that a submerged thermometer, at a depth of four fathoms, will be raised ten degrees higher than at the surface, whilst the scoriæ and volcanic cinders on the shore of some of the islands are hot, as if going through the process of baking.

† Diod. Lib. v.

tiades* (from Ηφαιστος, Vulcan), which was subsequently applied by the Greeks to the whole insular dominions.

They submitted to the yoke of Carthage during her days of maritime power and prosperity, and on the decline of the Carthaginian arms in Sicily, fell into the hands of the Romans, who re-colonized them, drew immense sources of wealth from their mineral products, erected baths, together with various other public buildings, and raised them to greater consequence than they had ever hitherto enjoyed.

STROMBOLI.—After an agreeable sail of five hours, we landed on the east side of Stromboli, at San Vincenzo, which being united to San Bartolo, forms the principal town of the place. For the want of a bill of health, with which it is necessary to be furnished, we met with some opposition to our approach, until the usual means were resorted to for obviating difficulties and mollifying the hearts of understrappers armed with authority, and we were conducted by our boatmen to the house of an acquaintance, whom they recommended for our escort to the crater. The houses are miserable, low dwellings, with flat roofs, receiving protection from the appalling menaces of one dilapidated, rusty gun.

The island lies about thirty-three miles north of Melazzo; it is ten miles in circumference, rising in the form † of an inverted conic tea-cup, to the height of two thousand five hundred feet, strewed with several small villages, which contain altogether nearly one thousand one hundred inhabitants.

Stromboli is a volcano known to every one for the celebrity of its active powers; and of all the burning mountains

* Hence also Livy styles them Æoliæ Insulæ, vel Vulcaniæ. 20. 51.

† Its form gave rise to its original appellation by the Greeks of Strongyle, from στρογγυλος, Cilindrus.

we are acquainted with, the only one peculiarized by the incessant eruptions and flow of ignited matter; but when it first burst forth we are quite at a loss to determine, there being no allusion made to that effect by the author of any age. The most ancient notice of its conflagrations transmitted to us by history, is about two hundred and ninety-two years before Christ. It was burning with great vehemence in the time of Augustus and Tiberius; but no farther mention is made of its subsequent state by any of the ancient annalists.

One half of the island presents a sterile, uncultivated tract of lava, cinders, and scoriæ, whilst the other is covered with luxuriant herbage, and richly cultivated with all sorts of fruits, cotton, and corn; it abounds in excellent figs and grapes, particularly that species called the Corinthian grape, which, when dried, forms the currants of commerce *. The Indian fig everywhere springs up spontaneously in great abundance, as well as the cane reed, which grows to a remarkable size, and is employed either in forming fences, or the training of vines.

Stromboli is curious for its many caverns, celebrated for their rare mineral productions, stalactitic formations, chrysolites, and transparent geodes; particularly the one called the Grotto Dei Bovi Marini, which is eighty-six feet long, thirty-five wide, and produces many fine crystalizations. It is situated at the termination of a black looking ferruginous beach, which extends from San Vincenzo to a remarkably high isolated rock called Strombolino.

Not far from San Vincenzo, at a place called Malpasso, are also three or four caves, celebrated for their abundant

* The inhabitants export annually a quantity of raisins, currants, figs, and wine to Sicily, where they receive in return clothing and other requisites for their consumption.

production of beautiful specular iron, which is found in the fissures of the lava, of which the projecting masses of rock are composed. I procured a few specimens, containing singularly brilliant and large laminæ, which have proved a valuable acquisition to the little collection I have since made. Enveloped in our cloaks, we slept until two o'clock, when our cicerone intimated the hour of departure, and we commenced the ascent to the crater, which is a tedious operation of two hours and a half. The road leads over an undulation of cultivated grounds, at the termination of which we entered a peasant's house, reposed a short time, and refreshed with some fruit, bread, and wine, our rustic host had spread before us on his homely board.

From hence the ascent is abruptly steep and precipitous, which being entirely composed of scoriæ and loose cinders, is more painful and difficult to mount than can be imagined, far surpassing the fatiguing passage up Vesuvius' slippery pinnacle.

The greatest efforts and most violent exertion are required to make any progress up the yielding sides of the hill, which at times totally sink under the pressure of the feet, and suddenly precipitate the body five or six feet back again, which, under the influence of exhaustion, is discouraging beyond description; however, we halted repeatedly to gain strength, during which the mind was constantly kept alive by the beautiful effects of the fiery vomitings from the crater, and we at length arrived in safety at the summit, where, on winding round a projecting rock, the blazing chasm suddenly developed to our view. It is about six hundred feet in diameter, situated considerably below the pinnacle on the north-east side, which enables the spectator to stand in perfect safety above, and contemplate the appalling spectacle of the volcanic operations beneath him.

Thick volumes of smoke are incessantly issuing from the mouth, which render it difficult to obtain a distinct view of the bottom. However, the wind occasionally dissipates them, and by patiently watching an opportunity, the ignited matter may be seen rising and falling as in a boiling cauldron, until it bursts forth with violent explosions and hissings, emitting showers of cinders, red hot stones, and molten matter; which (although they invariably fall in one direction towards the sea), I must confess caused me at times some involuntary sensations of trepidation, having narrowly escaped destruction by approaching too near the ejecting matter of Vesuvius in 1821.

There is a constant stream of red-hot lava flowing down the mountain from a small crater on the seaward side, independent of the eruptions from the large one, than which combined nothing can offer a more awful, and, at the same time, a more sublime picture of nature, in her most agitated and convulsed movements *.

What a splendid, though frightful spectacle, to the novice to stand on the brink of such a gulf, whilst volleys of immense stones enveloped in flames, cinders, and liquid lava, are shot to a distance of five or six hundred feet into the air, accompanied with roaring noises and loud detonations, that would put the nervous powers of the most vigorous constitution to the test; and our guide informed us that during these ejections the whole island is sometimes kept for minutes together in the most violent tremulous motion. How happy is it that providence has enabled mankind to become reconciled by habit to the contiguity of such appalling horrors!

* It is observed by the natives of this island that the operations of the mountain are considerably more active, and accompanied with greater inflammation in the winter than in summer; also during, as well as at the approach of stormy weather more violent than in mild breezes or calms.

We amused ourselves in the admiration of this wonderful phenomenon until the dawn broke from the eastern horison, when we commenced the descent, and slid, or, I may rather say, flew, with a rapidity quite incredible, down the precipice of cinders that had so recently caused us such painful fatigue to ascend; and after again taking a glass of wine with our friend at the cottage, we arrived about eight o'clock at San Vincenzo, where, having partaken of some refreshment from our basket, we embarked for Lipari.

CHAPTER XI.

From Stromboli to Lipari it is about ten miles, with the intervening islands of Panaria, Datolo, Baziluzzo, and Lisca. The wind seemed quite propitious to our adventures, for having drawn round to the northward, we were again enabled to make use of the sails, whilst our mariners entertained us with songs, which they sung in parts with considerable taste and effect: with one we were partiqularly pleased, a hymn addressed to the Virgin, which seemed to call forth a great deal of religious pathos and solemnity; the air was simple and plaintive, which they chaunted with a degree of harmony and expression I could little have expected from persons of their condition.

Panaria, according to Plato and Ptolemy, is the Eunonymus of the Greeks, and the Thermisia of the Romans, who so styled it on account of the hot mineral waters it is remarkable for. It is about six miles in circumference, with a fine fertile soil, which is cultivated by two hundred inhabitants, and produces an abundance of grain, fruits, and oil.

We landed at a little port on the south side, called Cala del Castello, from an old Roman castle, of which some vestiges still remain. During the time of the Romans it was a place of great importance, which has been proved by the discovery of numerous fragments of antiquity; and the island is peculiar, as being the only one possessing a yellow sandy beach in the whole group of the Liparis.

The other islands lie to the east, and south east of Panaria, and were anciently called Heraclidæ, but in more

modern ages, Datoli, on account of their similarity to a bunch of dates; however, one alone now retains the name, and is situated about a mile east of Panaria. It is merely a white precipitous uninhabited rock, but favourable, I imagine, to the industrious pursuits of the bee, since the Panarians keep their hives there, and derive from them considerable quantities of honey.

Two miles and a half to the east of Panaria lies Baziluzzo, the ΙΚΕΣΙΑ of the Greeks, and Hicetium of Ptolemy. It is nearly two miles in circumference, with steep rocky sides, which render it difficult of access. A very ancient flight of steps, hewn out of the rock by the Romans, to facilitate the approach, may still be seen, together with many other traces, that serve to identify its antiquity.

It is inhabited by two or three families, who cultivate its productive soil, in spite of the myriads of rabbits that war against their industry.

Lisca Bianca, situated a mile from Baziluzzo, is a small island, kept in cultivation by the Panarians, with two sterile rocks to the southward, called Lisca Nera*, and Bottaro, from the latter of which sulphate of alum is frequently collected in large quantities.

These islets are extremely remarkable for the heat of the surrounding waters at a considerable distance below the surface, and the sulphuric bubbles that are frequently observed rising, which afford strong testimony of the active operations of the volcanic fire beneath.

We reached the coast of Lipari about eight o'clock, and skimming along shore under the blanched cliffs of Campo Bianco, passed the little town of Canneto, and entered the harbour, a little after nine, where we were again obliged to have recourse to that infallible nostrum for removing

* Sometimes also called Tila Navi.

some little opposition we experienced to our landing, for the want of proper certificates of health; the administered dose soon took effect, and we were conducted to the Capuchin convent of Porto Salvo, where, by recommendation, we established our quarters for the day.

Lipari, the richest and most extensive island of the group, is nineteen miles in circumference, interspersed with towns and villages whose inhabitants amount to eleven thousand five hundred souls. According to Strabo, Pliny, and others, its original name, previous to the arrival of Liparus, was Meligonis, and on account of its size and fertility, it appears always to have been selected as the seat of government by the various adventurers that have successively usurped the possession of the Lipari islands.

The capital is a town of the same name, situated within a snug little bay at the south east extremity of the island. It claims pre-eminence over all the other towns of the Liparis for its antiquity, size, and romantic position. It was founded by King Liparus, consequently dates its celebrity as a city many years prior to the Trojan war. Its history is replete with a variety of events calculated to awaken the most animated interest of the classic traveller, and is rendered illustrious by the visit of Ulysses, who sojourned here a month under the friendly auspices and hospitality of King Æolus.

When it succeeded to the possession of the Greeks, it became celebrated for its piratical adventurers, by whose boldness and bravery the seas were swept of their Etruscan opponents, and the city enriched with the spoil.

Livy relates the following interesting anecdote of the Lipari pirates. In the year of Rome 356, after the taking of Veii by Camillus; the Roman citizens, to testify their

gratitude to the gods for the glorious successes they had gained, sent an offering of a valuable golden cup filled with the most costly jewels and ornaments, presented by their matrons, to the temple of Apollo at Delphos, with a deputation of priests and ambassadors, who, on their voyage, were all captured by the pirates and taken into Lipari; but Timasitheus, then chief magistrate of the city, dreading the vengeance of the Pythian Apollo, whom all the Greeks held in profound veneration, received them with honours at the public expense, and after manifesting every species of hospitality, restored the cup, liberated the deputation, and, furthermore, accompanied them himself, under the protection of an escort, to the holy fane of Delphos, where he assisted in dedicating the offerings.

Lipari, however, assuming a more honourable mode of life, rose to fame and prosperity under the wise administration of a republic, when it was adorned with temples and a celebrated prytaneum, containing all the treasure consecrated to Æolus and Vulcan.

Its riches tempted the cupidity of the wicked Agathocles, who sailed over from Sicily with a large fleet, extorted immense sums from individuals, robbed the temples and prytaneum, and bore away every thing that was valuable from the city; but Providence doomed the tyrant to pay the penalty of his crime, though probably not to the extent of his merits; for on quitting the island he encountered a violent storm, in which eleven ships, laden with the plunder, foundered, having himself narrowly escaped destruction from shipwreck on the rocky coast of Sicily.

During the proud days of Carthage, when her fleets held dominion over the seas, Lipari was a place much resorted to by them for supplies, shelter, or their surveil-

lance of their enemies, the Sicilian Greeks; and it was here Hamilcar, in the first Punic war, 256 B.C., surprised the unwary Roman, Cornelius, who sailed over with seventeen galleys to reconnoitre the Carthaginian force, and storm the rocky fastnesses of the city; but Hamilcar, lying then in Hiera with a superior force, and gaining intelligence of his approach, hastened to the timely assistance of Lipari, and captured the whole fleet of the unfortunate consul, who was also made prisoner. Before the conclusion of this war, however, Lipari fell into the hands of the Romans, who settled there, and ultimately made it a place of great commercial importance. Alum proved a very great source of profit to them, which they collected in immense quantities from the island, and carried to the mother country.

In the middle ages Lipari fell a prey to the piratical depredations of African corsairs, and was in the year 1544 partially destroyed, plundered, and many of the inhabitants borne away in slavery by the celebrated Ariadeno Barbarossa; who, with a fleet under the bloody banners of his infidel race, carried destruction along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, where he has left many memorials of his cruelty and desolation.

The town was immediately after restored by Charles V., who colonized it with Spaniards, and fortified it in its present form. It is divided into two parts, the lower town and citadel; the former of which is composed of indifferently built houses, formed into miserable looking streets, or rather alleys, crowded with churches and convents; the latter, romantically situated on a high precipitous rock of partially vitrified lava boldly projecting into the bay, contains the only three conspicuous edifices of Lipari, namely, the cathedral, the castle, or governor's house, and the bishop's palace, which, together with the rest of the town, and the mount-

lain forms of the back scene, constitute, when viewed from the water, one of the most interesting pictorial subjects that can be imagined.

The cathedral is an old edifice in the rudest style of Norman Gothic, raised by Count Roger, and consecrated to St. Bartholomew. It is celebrated for the richness of the utensils, and its quantity of plate, particularly a silver statue of the patron saint, which, with the innumerable sacred relics it contains, are held in the most profound veneration by the bigoted Liparese, whose superstition will not be wondered at, when the reader is informed, that nearly half the inhabitants are either priests, nuns, or friars of the different orders.

The Liparese are a robust, hardy race, well formed, with swarthy complexions, extremely friendly to strangers, and I do not know any place where the traveller is received with more hospitality or greater kindness; still retaining the courteous character which their early ancestors manifested to the great Trojan visitor.

Traces are not wanting to attest the antiquity or former fortunes of this town: many coins, both Grecian and Roman, have been discovered, which throw considerable light on its history, besides tombs, fragments of beautiful sculpture, inscriptions, and the substructions of edifices; the two latter of which are principally Roman *.

The bay of Lipari is about two miles in circumference, enclosed on the south by Cape Capistello, and on the north

* The most important remains of Romain architecture consist in the extensive substructions of a sudatory bath; the passages for conveying the steam are all perfect, supported by pillars, with a flooring above, adorned by a rude species of Mosaic in black and white marble, representing unintelligible allegorical subjects, executed in a style that leaves no room to doubt their antiquity.

by the projecting base of Monte Rosso, at the foot of which a very curious rock is to be seen, well worthy the attention of the mineral explorer; it is a porphyritic lava, beautifully red in parts, enclosing felspar, shoerl, and hornstone, and I think may be ranked under the denomination of volcanic breccia.

The island of Lipari is particularly fertile in parts, and although it produces grain of all sorts, is richest in fruits, abounding considerably in oil and wine, of which latter the celebrated Malvasia is cultivated with great success; the Corinthian grape (called by the natives passolina) also grows in great abundance, whilst splendid fig trees are everywhere seen shooting with wonderful luxuriance from the rocky fissures of lava, where it is difficult to imagine whence they derive the source of such vegetable productiveness.

Raisins, currants, figs, and Malvasia wine, together with pumice, and two or three other mineral productions, constitute the chief articles of exportation from which they are said to derive considerable profit.

The island is composed of a group of volcanic hills of every form and shape, the most prominent of which are those of St. Angelo and Guardia; their physical character is curious and excessively interesting to the mineralogist; and notwithstanding it is a volcanic production, no memorials are on record of any eruptions subsequent to the first known period of its habitation; therefore, we may presume it is one of the earliest formations of the Æolides; however, its subterranean fires are not yet extinct, as is evinced by the numerous hot mineral springs, as well as the increased heat that is produced by excavation in various parts of the island.

Campo Bianco, about three miles from the city, is a white-looking, sterile mountain, striated with gullies, formed

by the rains, and covered with all the most curious varieties of pumice, intermixed with obsidian and beautiful specimens of light sulphuric scoriæ, that reflect all the brilliant colours of the prism, but so subtle as to be destroyed by a breath. Some of the pumices are also equally fragile and iridescent, with a fine pearly lustre, and translucent on the edges, with sometimes white silvery scales or lamellæ; others with fibrous angular nodules, and grains of black volcanic glass.

Behind Campo Bianco there is a range of hills covered with blackish and more compact pumice, vitrifactions, a few breccias, and obsidian.

Monte Guarda, and others, furnish lavas of every colour, some curiously encrusted with a vitrified matter, resembling varnish, which, resisting the corrosive influence of air and humidity, accounts for the little progress made in the decomposition of these hills, and their consequent sterile condition.

Monte Castagna is remarkable for its quantity of obsidians of different species, and porphyritic lavas, enclosing crystals of felspar, augite, mica, quartz, &c.

At the north end of the island, at the termination of the fertile little valley of Malini, are several caverns, celebrated for their hot vapours, which, though variable in point of temperature, are frequently known to exceed 140° Fahrenheit. At a short distance from them is the Grotto del Demonio, so called from an old monkish legend which reports his satanic majesty to have escaped thither from the pursuit of St. Calogero. On the shore stands the Torre Permeta, where there is a landing place and road leading to the caves.

The most celebrated baths mentioned by the ancients, and particularly remarked by Diodorus, are now called the

baths of St. Calogero. They are situated on the southern coast near Punta Perciata, and have exercised the curiosity and researches of philosophers of all ages; the waters rise in great abundance, with a temperature of, from 120° to 140° of Fahrenheit. Their analysis I could not learn; but such is their efficacy in a variety of disorders, and the estimation in which they are held by the inhabitants, that they are brought frequently to Lipari for the use of patients, who are incapable of using them on the spot, on account of the want of accomodation or comforts.

After exploring the town (where we met with unbounded civility from every individual), and making a variety of excursions in search of minerals and antiquities, we returned to our quarters at the convent, where the worthy hosts of the cowl gave us every reason to feel satisfied with their company as with their fare: we found them communicative, and gained, during our sojourn, a fund of local information relative to the islands and their inhabitants.

Four miles to the north-west of Lipari is situated the island of Salina. According to Ptolemy, and others, it was called Didyme by the ancients (Δι δομη), on account of its bifurcated form, which is composed of two high conic mountains, Malaspina and Felice, between which runs a beautiful valley, celebrated for its richness and fertility, where, amongst other productions, a fine species of the Malvasia grape is cultivated to a great extent. The hills on the north-west side are well wooded, picturesque, and abound in game.

The island is twelve miles in circumference, with several villages, and a population of four thousand souls, reputed for their filthiness and disease. On the south-east side of the coast, near the battery and church of Lingua Marina, are the ruins of a Roman reticulated wall, like those of

Pozzuoli and Naples; and not far from thence a lake where a quantity of salt is manufactured, hence the modern name of the island. Alum and saltpetre are also procured here in great abundance; and the rocks are celebrated for that curious species of muscle called the Pinna Squamosa*, from the byssus or beard of which the women of the island make extremely nice gloves. From the same article the Romans spun a fine silk, and manufactured a costly stuff of which their imperial robes were made.

The channel between this island and the main is memorable for an obstinate drawn battle, fought between the French and Dutch fleets, whose commanders, satisfied with each other's bravery and exertions, mutually withdrew, and made sail in different directions.

Felicudi (anciently Phœnicusa, from its abundant production of the palmetto), lies about ten miles to the westward of Lipari, and is ten miles in circumference, with a population of one thousand souls; it is distinguished by three high mountains †, and a long curved isthmus on the south, which forms the two snug little ports of Conca di Lao and Caladi Speranza. The coasts are rugged, abrupt, and inaccessible in the west, with an immense curious cave, one hundred and sixty feet long, one hundred and twenty broad, and fifty high; formed into spacious chambers by natural arches, and was a place of refuge for the Barbary pirates that infested these seas until within a very recent period. On the north-west side of the coast there is a curious slender-formed rock, rising out of the water to the

* This muscle abounds in the Mediterranean, and is found from eight to twelve inches in length. By the Romans it was called the marine silk-worm.

† Montagnuolo is the most lofty, being upwards of three thousand feet, and the highest of all the Lipari islands.

height of two hundred and eighty feet, which, in consequence of its longitudinal grotesque shape, has received the appellation of Canna.

The island is extremely fertile, and produces grain, olives, and grapes in abundance; and boasts a finer species of cattle than any of the Liparis.

The mineral productions are three-sided prismatic basalts without joints, vitrified cinders and tufa, with ferruginous and argellaceous lavas, enclosing crystalized felspar and shoerl.

Alicudi, (according to Strabo and Ptolemy the Ericusa of the ancients, and so denominated from the heaths with which it abounded), is about six miles to the westward of Felicudi, and is six miles in circumference, with not more than two hundred and fifty inhabitants: it is high, precipitous, surrounded by rugged rocks, and excessively difficult of access, the only good landing place being on the south side, near Cape Palomba. Its physical character is much the same as Felicudi, and is cultivated wherever the volcanic ingredients are sufficiently decomposed for the purposes of vegetation.

Having replenished our viaticum we bade adieu to the convent at four the following morning, (Monday, December 20th), and embarked again for the neighbouring island of Vulcano; which, being but four miles distant, we arrived and landed in the port, on the north-west side, at a little past five.

Vulcano was the Hiera* of the Greeks (the Templum Vulcani of Strabo, and Vulcania Tellus of Virgil), so called because, as Diodorus Siculus states, consecrated by them, on account of its fires, to their fabled god Vulcan. It was

* Diodorus.

afterwards called Vulcania * by the Romans, who, when in possession of these islands, annually celebrated at Lipari the festivals of the Vulcanalia †.

The island is eleven miles and a half in circumference, rising to a height of about two thousand feet from the level of the sea. The north and east sides are entirely barren, presenting a dark gloomy aspect, without the slightest appearance of vegetation, whilst the sides fronting the west and south are covered with luxuriant pastures, interspersed here and there with ilex, quantities of broom, underwood, and shrubs.

On account of the deficiency of water it remained uninhabited, and was only frequented by sportsmen in quest of the rabbits, with which it is infested, or goatherds who came over during the day to tend the herds of goats sent by the Liparese for the benefit of the pasture; until within the last five or six years, since which several houses have been built on the south side on a beautiful verdant declivity called the Luna farm, where two or three families have brought the soil to a profitable state of cultivation. Works have also been recently established at the foot of the crater to procure sal amoniac, alum, and sulphur, which has considerably augmented the number of inhabitants, and, I have no doubt, in the course of a short period, will render it extremely populous. In the centre of a valley a fine copious spring has been discovered, but from the extensive sterility of its locality little advantage is derived from it; though, in case of emergency or an in-

* Insula Sicanium juxta latus, Æoliumque
Erigitur Liparea fumantibus ardua saxis.
\- - - - - -
Vulcani domus et Vulcania nomine tellus.—*Æneid.*

† Vide Lemprier's Classical Dictionary.

creased population, it might easily be rendered subservient to the supplies of more distant habitations.

Vulcano is one of the oldest burning mountains recorded by ancient writers. The first account we have of its eruptions is from the pen of Thucydides, and after him Aristotle, Polybius, Strabo, and others, who have given lengthened descriptions of its convulsive operations, the first of whom calls it the lighthouse of the mariners, on account of its unceasing ignited state; and during one eruption describes the town of Lipari to have been menaced with destruction by the prodigious quantity of ashes it ejected.

The eruptions, however, became more intermittent in the early ages of the christian era, and the last most violent one known occurred in 1444, though others of less note burst forth in 1726, 1775, and 1786, which latter closed the list of its ejections, and confined its movements to the interior of the crater.

At the northern extremity of the island is a peninsulated mass of volcanic matter, called Vulcanello, which rose from the sea, accompanied with a violent eruption, in the year 204 B. C. *, and is recorded by Pliny and Eusebius, who observe, that on account of the excessive heat produced in the surrounding waters on that occasion, the surface of the sea was covered during many days with an abundance of dead fish, which, being taken with avidity by the poor inhabitants of Lipari, caused the greater number of those who eat of them to be poisoned.

There are two small craters, one of which only remains, and still produces occasional noises, but without any signs of ejection. Vulcanello was entirely separated from Vulcano by a small strait, until the lavas of the last eruptions

* Some modern authors say 180 B. C., but the authority of Pliny and others disproves the assertion.—Lib. ii. 90.

closed up the channel and united it to the main. It now forms two excellent commodious little ports for shipping, one on the east, the other on the west side, named according to their situation Porto Levante and Porto Ponente, the latter of which is enclosed by rugged rocks of lava, presenting a most picturesque appearance within.

The access and ascent being easiest on this side the island, and totally devoid of difficulty, we proceeded to the great crater of Vulcano, accompanied by two of our boatmen. The road leads over a tract of earth covered with scoriæ, ashes, and ferruginous lava, and across a deep valley to the mountain that forms the crater, which stands entirely unconnected with the circumjacent hills.

We paused a short time to examine the abovementioned works, established at an excavation about half way up, for the purpose of obtaining sulphur, alum, and sal ammoniac. The cavern in places is impenetrable, on account of the excessively dense hot vapours which issue from the fissures; but the specimens of stalactitic sulphur are so beautiful, and so much finer here than at Cattolica, that I could not resist exploring the various recesses, even at the expense of a good vapour-bath.

The mouth of the great crater is on a plain at the summit of the mountain, and exhibits, either to the common observer or the mineralogist, a more beautiful and gratifying interior than any known volcano in the world. It is a mile in circumference, and nearly a thousand feet deep, encrusted with volcanic products of great rarity, and of the most brilliant colours, which have been modified into the most captivating varieties by decomposition, sulphuric vapours, efflorescences, and deposits by sublimation.

A variety of obnoxious vapours at times rush from the crevices; and about half way down the northern side a

hot spring issues from a rock covered with curious crystallizations and stalactites of alum; in its fall it trickles over several projecting masses, forming interesting specimens of concretions, coated with alum, vitriol, &c.; in other parts, scoriæ of all sorts, from the most delicate yellow to dark buff and orange, may be found, together with muriate of copper, in small deliquescent crystals; red and yellow orpiment, and obsidian in a perfect state of fusion. Indeed, no crater can possibly present a grander or more splendid display of volcanic products, or is better suited to the researches of the mineralogist. Though no eruptions now occur, its subterranean fires are still in an active state, being intimated by emissions of smoke, and loud noises like the boiling of a cauldron*, accompanied with tremendous motions under the feet, which, at periods, our companions told us seemed as if the whole island were about to be swallowed up by the sea.

Other parts of the island, as well as the crater, are equally interesting to the mineralogist, from the rare production of beautiful and curious breccias, varialitic lava converted into fine enamels, one of which is peculiarly remarkable; it is dark grey, sprinkled with light round spots, produced by globules under the enamel. Pumice, of light beautiful texture, obsidians, and a great variety of green and red vitrifications, are also abundant on the north-east side of the island†.

* The water also, as well as the earth on the beach, in many parts of the shore, are at times in a state of the most surprising heat.

† The western coast of Vulcano is peculiar for its caverns, particularly those of Cala di Farmaggio and Grotto del Cavallo: the former has a large rock in the centre, and is now the resort of fishermen in bad weather as formerly it was of pirates; the latter is celebrated for its fine specimens of green vitriol and sulphate of iron, which latter occurs both massive and crystallized in right oblique-angled prisms.

Reposing on a porpheritic mass of lava, overhanging the precipitous borders of the crater, we made a hearty breakfast from the contents of our basket; and after completing a collection of specimens as we descended by the eastern side to Porto Levante, (where we had appointed to rejoin the boat), we embarked at nine o'clock for Sicily.

CHAPTER XII.

Auspicious breezes from the north-west favoured our passage, which rendered the labours of the rowers unnecessary, and after a most delightful sail of three hours, we landed at the small village of Olivieri, seventeen miles from Vulcano, situated on a river of the same name, and anciently the streams of the Helicon. Having settled accounts for the services of our faithful mariners and their little bark, we proceeded on mules to the ruins of the ancient Tyndaris, by a steep, rugged, winding path, called the "Scala di Tindari," first visiting the old baronial castle of Scalaproto, which is approached by a winding road, beautifully shaded with trees; it is the habitation of a respectable old Sicilian baron, whose hospitable courtesey and kindness affords to the stranger an easy and acceptable admission to the little collection of antiquities he has made from the neighbouring ruins.

Tyndaris, situated on the summit of a high promontory, steep and precipitous towards the sea, was founded by a party of expatriated Messinians from the Peloponnesus, in the reign of the elder Dionysius, who, with his characteristic artful policy, favoured their colonization, and bound them to his interests by endowing them with lands. By a remarkable spirit of enterprize and industry, they became, in a few years, a prosperous people, in possession of a flourishing city, which they named after one in their own country, and adorned it with temples, porticos, and the splendid villas of its opulent citizens.

It obtained great renown for the magnificence of a tem-

ple consecrated to Mercury, and the pompous festivals that were annually celebrated in honour of the god*; a statue of whom, in the most exquisite style of the art, embellished the heathen shrine, and was hallowed with extraordinary reverence by the citizens. Such was its beauty and perfection, that it was borne away by the Punic invaders to adorn the galleries of Carthage, when, after the ruin of Hymæra, they ravaged the whole of this coast. It was, however, restored by the brave Scipio, at his destruction of Carthage; an act that animated the inhabitants with such a deep sense of gratitude and admiration, that they sealed their allegiance to Rome with a solemn oath, to which they ever after most religiously adhered; and after the conquest of the island by Marcellus raised an equestrian statue of that hero, in the city, to celebrate their annexation to the Roman power.

Tyndaris became conspicuous for the spirited resistance of its citizens to the rapacity and attrocities of Verres, for whose base conduct and cruelties they loudly demanded vengeance from Rome; and, through the irresistible eloquence of Cicero, obtained from the senate his recall and removal from the prætorship.

The Romans considerably embellished this city with public edifices. Cicero† frequently mentions it, describing it as noble, rich, and abundant, and its inhabitants the allies and friends of the Romans. It was standing in

* The wicked prætor, Verres, ardently coveting the possession of the beautiful statue from the temple of Mercury, commanded Proagoras, an opulent and popular citizen, to procure it, who firmly refusing the request, was publicly scourged and bound to the statue of Marcellus, where he lay exposed until his sympathising countrymen procured his release, on the promise of yielding up the object of the tyrant's exaction.

† "Nobilissimam et commeatu fœcundam ac refertam et bello maritimo satis accommodam."—*Cicer. ad Verr.*

the wars between Octavius and Pompey, and even as late (though in a reduced and decayed condition) as the reign of Frederick II., after which, on account of earthquake, and other disasters, it became totally deserted and annihilated, and now presents but a few scattered heaps of ruins, with a solitary convent boldly towering above the rocky eminence, which, whilst it diffuses a holiness around the ancient site, serves to immortalize the memory of its name and early splendour, being distinguished by the appellation of Santa Maria di Tindaro. The surrounding fields are strewed with the vestiges of tombs and cisterns, fragments of sculpture, columns, highly wrought cornices, broken vases, lamps, &c., &c.; whilst the remains of several important edifices are still discernable, besides a spacious theatre, which was in part formed by the rocky eminence on which it stood, and is highly worthy of remark for the incomparable beauty of its situation, where the spectators commanded the prospect of a delicious picture, that embraces a wide expanse of the blue Tyrrhene sea to the north, studded with the scattered isles of Lipari; to the south the luxuriant country of the Piano di Brolo, girt with the thickly wooded mountains of Caronia, and to the east, the variegated plains of Melazzo. Having had no refreshment since our breakfast at Vulcano, we seated ourselves in this splendid focus of nature, and enjoyed the contemplation of its exquisite beauty and sublimity whilst partaking the homely luxury of our travelling larder.

The architect has availed himself of a cavity in the hill for the formation of the front of the theatre, which part remains perfect with a proportion of the walls that composed the scenium; but vegetation has nearly thrown a covering over the whole, and it is difficult to distinguish more than the form.

Not far from the theatre are the remains of a splendid edifice, which, I have no doubt, was the gymnasium alluded to by Cicero in his orations; several finely formed massive arches, with niches and pilasters, still exist, to attest the former magnificence and architectural solidity.

According to Pliny, part of the town * was precipitated into the sea by a dreadful earthquake, the place of which is visible both by a steep broken precipice on the east side, and the fragments of masonry that are found in the part under the heights.

Tyndaris was surrounded by walls formed of immense oblong stones, closely fixed together without cement, many of which may be traced to this day as firmly united as if but recently executed. One gate only appears to have afforded access to the town, the highly preserved ruins of which present a splendid monument of the durability and excellence of ancient masonry.

To the eastward of the town, on the summit of a hill, anciently stood a celebrated temple, consecrated to the Olympic Jupiter, of which, though now levelled and annihilated, sufficient fragments remain to ascertain its site; and the memory of it is awakened in the traveller's reminiscences by the appellation of the hill, which, on account of the ancient fane, is still called Monte Jove.

In the first Punic war, Tyndaris was much resorted to by the Roman fleets, both on account of its plentiful supplies as well as its favourable locality for the surveillance of the north coast of Sicily. Its name is immortalized, and

* The monkish records at the adjoining convent state this disaster to have occurred on the day of the crucifixion of our Saviour; but little faith can be placed on such authority; if we did, how many absurdities must we not give credence to?—how many palpable inventions framed to render the world subservient to the sacerdotal interest and papal power.

raised to an ostensible place in the interesting annals of antiquity, by the memorable naval contest between Regulus and the Carthaginians, 256 B. C.; the latter of whom, standing along the coast for Panormus, were no sooner espied than attacked by the intrepid Regulus, who, with only ten galleys, sallied out of the port in pursuit, leaving orders for the remainder of the fleet to follow as quickly as possible; but the Carthaginians, seeing the inferiority of their pursuers, suddenly turned upon their too audacious enemy, and destroyed every galley excepting the one of Regulus, who immediately heading the rest of his fleet, which had by that time come up, amply revenged his first loss and disgrace by a most complete victory, after an obstinate and bloody action, in which he sunk eight of the Carthaginian vessels, took ten, and forced the remainder to fly into Lipari for protection.

The ancient port is on the east side of point Tyndaris, now called Porta Madonna, from the convent that crowns the overhanging cliff. Appian, Pliny, and Cicero, all extol its advantages; but although it might have been sufficiently convenient for the naval purposes of ancient days, it is now only suited to the uses of small coasting craft or fishing boats.

After wandering over the venerable site, and investigating the remains that lay scattered along the now silent and deserted heights, we descended the hill by a path called also on this side, the Scala di Tyndari, and proceeded to Patti, distant six miles, where we arrived about six o'clock.

The northern coast of Sicily has been hitherto most frequently neglected by travellers, being generally considered unattractive, because unable to boast of the same number of cities celebrated in the history of antiquity for their

warlike importance or military achievements as the south; however, I consider it by no means wanting in interest either to the eye or the imagination, of which ample testimony is afforded in the records of Diodorus, Strabo, Pliny, and Cicero, who describe it as interspersed with towns reputed for their riches and population, lands teeming with the beneficence of nature, and a climate even superior to that of the south. Whilst in modern days it continues remarkable for its local amenity and forest scenery, the fertility of the soil, the beauty and luxuriance of its vegetation, and the abundance of its delicious fruits; also the beautiful formation of its coast, which is divided into gracefully curving bays and picturesque creeks, by bold projecting promontories and rocky capes, whose precipitous heights are frequently crowned by the romantic ruins of some fallen castle or deserted convent, which considerably enhance the pictorial effect of the coast, and give additional zest to the traveller's researches in quest of scenic beauties.

Patti is situated on an eminence open to the sea, girt on the south by an amphitheatre of picturesque hills, and watered at the base by the Fiume di Patti, or Timetus of antiquity. It is tolerably well built, with regular streets, and contains about four thousand inhabitants, who are comparatively prosperous from their industry in the pursuits of the tunny fishery, and the manufacture of coarse earthenware, for which this place is celebrated.

The town is not of very ancient origin. It was first brought into notice by Count Roger the Norman, who in 1094 founded the Benedictine convent, and erected the cathedral; which latter is ennobled with the remains and sepulchre of his wife Adelaide. It is of plain, rude, Norman gothic, consecrated to St. Bartholomew, and in conjunction with the aforementioned one of Lipari was,

by permission of Pope Boniface, established as the head church of an episcopal see. There is little to be seen within, excepting a highly wrought gothic cross, and the rich materials of which, as usual, the high altar is composed.

The bishop's palace (formerly a Norman castle, and coeval with the dilapidated walls which surround the town), stands, with the cathedral, in the most elevated part of the city, producing at a distance a beautiful effect when embodied with the adjoining landscape; and particularly so when viewed from the western suburbs, where, strolling in search of novelties on the evening of our arrival, our attention was suddenly arrested by the splendour of the prospect. The last ruddy glare of a brilliant evening gave a mellow tinge to the prominent sides of the distant hills; the town lay before us, from whose centre reared the lofty walls of the church and castle, memorials at once of the valour and the piety of the great Norman chieftain who founded them; to the right, rising from a chain of mountain heights, the pinnacle of Ætna disgorged its black smoky volumes; and to the left, on the tranquil bosom of the Tyrrhene sea, lay the scattered isles of Lipari, with the unceasing flames of Stromboli shooting into the expanse above, like a Pharos warning the distant mariners from the rocky isles. All this we viewed with transported feelings; for nature was there in a variety of captivating forms, and we were doubly disposed to the enjoyment of such a scene by the extreme mildness of the evening and the serenity of the atmosphere; for not a breath stirred in the heavens; and although in the last days of December, Fahrenheit's thermometer stood as high as 50°. Indeed the climate throughout the year on this coast of Sicily is so delightfully genial, that were the country in any way

enjoyable, as far as society and the common comforts of life are concerned, I am persuaded no place in the world could offer greater attractions to those persons whose physical happiness depends on the quality of atmosphere.

We here hired fresh mules to take us as far as Termini; and the following morning (Tuesday, 21st), at eight o'clock, pursued our journey. Traversing the little town o Sorrentino, we left the deserted heights of Giojosa* to the right, and the figgy shades of Librizzi to the left, and passed along a gently winding bay, formed by the Capes Calava and Orlando; the former a steep rock, clothed above with corn-fields and vineyards, and remarkable for a curious cavern called the Castello di Liago.

We soon skirted the town of Brolo, situated at the confluence of two torrents, with its tottering Saracenic castle near the shore, which is overlooked by the ancient town of Pyracmium, now called Paraino. The beautiful country that now lay before us is called the Piano di Brolo, a valley at once picturesque, fertile, and beautifully adorned at every season with a variety of luxuriant and odoriferous shrubs and plants. It is situated between the sea and an undulation of hills, whose sides and summits are here and there spread with the thick shades of underwood and forest.

Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata hic nemus.

The oleander and yellow poppy abound, as also the mulberry, the fig, and the aloe, the latter of which seems

* Giojosa stands on a rocky eminence, but on account of several disastrous earthquakes is now deserted, and a new town built at the base of the mountain, near the sea: the former now exhibits a most melancholy picture; not a soul remains within its precincts; even the monkish piles are all abandoned to a host of probably equally useful race of beings, rats, screech-owls, and bats. Librizzi is celebrated for its abundant production of figs, which the inhabitants dry for exportation.

to claim pre-eminence over the rest, by rearing its floral thyrsus frequently beyond the summit of the spreading fig, with whose companionship it oftentimes is seen not unpicturesquely combined.

Diodorus lavishes the most unqualified eulogies on the mountain heights, refreshing breezes, cooling springs, wooded shades, and smiling plains, that so gracefully characterize this part of the country; and I am sure, however bigotted the traveller may be in pursuit of antiquarian researches, here at least nature will triumph for a time, and by expanding his heart, will elevate his sentiments to the contemplation of the beneficent power that created so many wondrous charms!—so much loveliness!

Five miles beyond Brolo is the town of Naso (the ancient Nasidas), situated on an eminence clothed with wood; it is a place of between seven and eight thousand inhabitants, surrounded with walls, and possesses several good edifices. After crossing a river of the same name, we arrived about twelve o'clock, put up our steeds, and accompanied by a man whose services we procured for the carriage of our basket, as well as for the supply of any local information, we descended the hill to the store houses on the Marina, and from thence proceeded to the heights of Cape Orlando, a bold, sterile, rocky promontory, so called from an ancient castle * of that name that crowned the summit, and which, though a heap of ruins, still retains the appellation of Castello. A small chapel has been built from the fragments, with a tenement for its solitary priest, who with an only man servant perform the combined offices of spiritual and temporal defenders of the church,

* This castle derived its name from some valorous deeds having been performed in the vicinity by the chivalrous nephew of Charlemagne, the renowned hero of Ariosto's poetic tale.

land claim the exclusive command of an adjoining battery formed of four guns, which, however, will never put either their valour or activity to the test, being under any circumstances totally unserviceable. Seated on one of them, we enjoyed our breakfast, and at the same time a magnificent prospect of the sparkling sea on one side, and the luxuriant country just described on the other, whilst the old priest joined in our potations, and related, together with many legends of the place, numerous instances of the fatal shipwrecks of former days, which have given rise to the absurd notion of the promontory being dangerous to navigators, on account of sudden squalls. The danger, however, has arisen rather from a want of skill, and ignorance of the rocks that lie near the shore, and it is no more to be dreaded than any other head-land on the coast.

At two o'clock we returned to Naso, and remounted our mules for St. Agatha, distant eleven miles; the road leads along a plain, and across the fiume Fitaglia, with the village of Capri to the left, and Terra Nova to the right; beyond whence stands, on an eminence to the left, the city of San Marco, the Calacta of the ancients, which Diodorus, Cicero, and others, describe as situated on the most beautiful shore of Sicily: hence the origin of its Grecian name *.

A variety of ruins in the neighbourhood attest its antiquity, besides coins of different ages that have been found, not many years ago, by the labourers of the place.

The modern town derives its name from a church raised on the ruins of the old one during the middle ages, and devoted to the apostle. The surrounding country is richly cultivated, and with the plain below, which an Italian author thus describes, "Bella, amenissima, pien d'ogni

* καλος pulchor, and ακτη littus.

sorte di frutte e fontane," produces silk, fruits, grain, oil, and wine.

The ancient town of Aluntium lay farther up the hills, beyond Miletello, and is now called Alonge; it was memorable in the days of the ancients for the riches and luxury of the inhabitants, and was plundered on one occasion of all its valuables by Agathocles.

We reached Sta. Agatha at five in the evening, the site of the ancient Agathurnum, according to Diodorus, so called from the name of its Grecian founder. No traces, however, are left to record the classical site but a situation corresponding to the description of the early writers, and the remains of a Roman bridge over the river; its name, having been handed down, has alone given rise to the application of the assimilated one of Sta. Agatha to the modern hamlet on the shore, which is unhealthy and uninviting, and furnished neither very clean or agreeable quarters for our nocturnal sojourn.

Wednesday, 22d.—We set out at eight o'clock, after exploring the adjacent river Inganno, or, as it is most frequently called, Rosa Marina, on account of the plant of that name abounding on its banks, and which is seen beautifully mantling the rocks, with its grey flowers covered with dew, and glittering in the sun. Oleanders and myrtles also add to the flowing richness of this interesting torrent, whilst mulberry trees cloathe the neighbouring grounds.

The remains of a massy Roman bridge, of seven arches, of which one continues perfect, give somewhat of stability to the presumed site of Agathyrnum, which Livy says existed at the period of Marcellus's conquest, and was enriched as well as improved by the Romans.

From hence the hills approach nearer the sea, and our

path led along the shore, with the thick forests of Caronia stretching their wooded heights nearly twenty miles east and west; besides producing oak, elm, cork, pine, and ash, they are rich in fruit trees. Diodorus, in his fifth book, calls them Heræi, and particularly celebrates their "amenity, perpetual summer, and refreshing streams;" and to their abundant fruits once a Carthaginian army owed its preservation from famine and destruction.

We passed the convent of San Fratello* to the left on the hill; to the right two old watch towers on the shore; crossed several fiumare, and at eleven reached Caronia, according to Ptolemy and Strabo the ancient site of Alessa. It stands on a rugged eminence near the sea, with a population of two thousand inhabitants, and an old dilapidated castle.

There is nothing of peculiar interest to attract the traveller at modern Caronia: as Alessa it is enumerated by Cicero amongst the most ornamented towns, and as celebrated for the courtesy and good faith of the inhabitants; and in his epistle he calls it noble and delicate. To the south of the mountain forests of Caronia is the theatre of the first great successes of the Normans over the Saracens, Troina, Sperlinga, and Cerami, the latter of which is memorable for a most glorious defeat of the infidels by Roger.

From Caronia the road leads round the curvature of a little bay to the small town of Santa Stephano, and from thence to Tusa, the Alicia or Aleta of the ancients, so often mentioned by Cicero and Diodorus†. The modern

* This convent was established by the Lombards, and called San Philadelfo, on account of a pious christian of that name who suffered martyrdom near the site during the persecutions of Valerian. Time has corrupted it to the present name of Fratello.

† Cicer. ad Verr.

town is situated on a healthy spot, on a hill between Mount Tauro and the sea.

We next crossed the river Pollina, so called from the town and old picturesque castle of that name, situated on the pinnacle of a steep hill to the south-west, and reached the village of Finale a little after sun-set, where we took up our quarters for the night. It is situated just within Cape Rasicalbo * and the little haven called Porto de Corsari, which is defended by a castle on the shore.

Thursday, 23d.—Intending to reach Termini this evening, thirty-six miles, we mounted our mules before day-light. The road to Cefalù leads across the rivers Malportuso and Carbone, through a picturesque, fertile country, abounding in oil, wine, and silk. Heaths, myrtles, cistus, with timber of various sorts, cloathe the romantic mountains to the left, particularly the manna ash, which is celebrated for the superiority of its juices, and is a profitable source of revenue to this part of the country.

Cefalù (the Cephalædis of the ancients) is a town of about eight thousand inhabitants, surrounded by an old bastioned wall, situated at the foot of a conic mountain projecting into the sea. The ancient city stood on the summit, and may be traced amongst the earliest of the Græco-Sicilian establishments on this coast; but notwithstanding its local capacities and formidable position as a fortress in those times, it never attained to any degree of wealth or power, or figured in the page of fame. According to Ptolemy, Cicero, and Strabo, it derives its apellation from its headland position (κεφαλη caput), andmany remains of its Grecian founders are still identifiable, such as cisterns, tombs, &c.; besides the discovery of coins, now in the possession of Prince Biscaris and others.

* The name of a Moorish corsair that was wrecked there.

An old ruined Saracenic castle now crowns the most elevated part; and a short distance down the ascent stands the skeleton of a structure, whose era or destination I feel equally at a loss to establish. It has been absurdly ascribed to the Phœnicians, who in no age had any settlement there; and from the irregularity of its formation, as well as style of construction, I deem it even of more recent erection than the Roman or the Grecian ages.

The Saracens were the last inhabitants of the old town, and the modern city was transferred to its present site by King Roger the Norman, who in a perilous voyage from Naples made a vow to raise a church in whatever place it should please Providence to restore him safe to land, which being at Cefalù, he caused the present cathedral to be built in 1145, and by exemptions encouraged the inhabitants of the ancient town, together with numerous other people, to transfer their abodes round its walls, and thus established in the course of a few years a populous city.

It is now an episcopal see*, and a place of considerable trade, which is carried on by small craft, and possesses several extensive tunny fisheries in the vicinity; the harbour, however, is not very spacious, admitting scarcely more than fifty vessels, and those of limited tonnage.

The cathedral is a specimen of the rude gothic, supported by marble pillars, with cloisters that merit the attention of the architectural amateur, as illustrative of the style of gothic that peculiarized that period of the art. It was originally adorned by Roger with two splendid porphery sarcophagi, and was honoured with the remains

* The bishop's palace stands outside the walls; it is a large edifice, composed of three sides of a quadrangle, one wing of which is devoted to the uses of a public seminary, where all the different branches of learning are taught.

of its Norman founder, all of which (as before observed) was transferred by Frederick to the cathedral of Palermo.

The town has by no means an unpicturesque appearance, seen crouching under the projecting eminence of its parent site. The neighbourhood produces oil, fruits, and manna; hence the Saracenic name of the hill to the left on leaving Cefalù, Gibelmanna* (given by the Saracens on account of its celebrity for the manna ash), and the subsequent application of it to a fine Capuchin convent, beautifully situated amongst its sequestered recesses.

To the south of Gibelmanna lies the town of Collesano (the ancient Paropus), near which Amilcar, 258 B. C., surprised and slew four thousand Sicilians, whilst suspending their co-operations with the Romans to dispute the post of honour and right of command, eloquently mentioned by Polybius as a warning to excite unanimity amongst modern commanders under similar circumstances.

From Cefalù the country presents to the left a picturesque mass of undulated mountains, terminated by a more elevated range called Madonie, the Nebrodes† of the ancients, so named from the abundance of wild deer that in early ages frequented their retreats.

They are rich in picturesque scenery, combining the wild horrors of rocky declivities with the more smiling and ornamented graces of nature. Conventual retreats here and there crown some of the most interesting eminences, whose amenity, fertility, and local sublimities, have invited the holy friars to linger away their useless lives in such attractive seclusions; but it may generally be observed, I believe, that these pious fraternities in all parts of the

* Mount Manna.

† Νεβρος, hinnulus. Solinus also observes, "Nebrodem damulæ et hinnuli pervagantur unde Nebrodes."

world, have selected for their establishments the most beautiful and romantic sites the country could afford; seeking, I presume, in the splendid loveliness of nature, compensation for those worldly gratifications their sacred vows oblige them to forego.

These mountains, though no longer celebrated for the wild deer, still afford an inexhaustible source of diversion for the lover of field sports. They abound in nuts, mushrooms, aromatic and medicinal herbs, which latter are largely collected for the use of the conventual laboratories. In minerals also they are particularly rich, and have furnished some of the finest fossils in Sicily.

Next to Ætna it is the most formidable range of mountains in the island, the highest peak being upwards of six thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Twelve miles from Cefalù the road crosses the river Rocella, the Auricellus of the ancients, and the present boundary that divides the Val Demona from the Val di Mazzara.

We next traversed the fiume Grande, the ancient Himæra Septentrionalis, and in the rainy season one of the most important rivers of Sicily. On its banks stood the celebrated town of the same name, founded, according to the concurring testimony of the ancient historians, by a colony of Zankleans, under Simus, Sacon, and Euclides, composed of Chalcidians and Dorians, but principally the latter, whose language and laws prevailed. It became, in process of time, a great state; but falling under the dominion of Agrigentum, was governed by Theron's son, Thrasidius, during whose magistracy one of the greatest and most bloody battles recorded in antiquity was fought under its walls, 480 B. C., which same year (and some

writers affirm the same day) was memorable for the glorious encounter of the three thousand Spartans at Thermopylæ.

The Carthaginians, endeavouring to recover their lost territories in Sicily, sent a fleet and prodigious armament, consisting of three hundred thousand men, under Amilcar*, first to attack Himæra, and then to proceed against the fortified cities of the south: but Gelon, the chief magistrate of the republic of Syracuse, seeing the danger of countenancing the progress of so formidable an army, formed an alliance with Theron, and hastened with fifty thousand men to the relief of Himæra: a sanguinary conflict was the consequence, in which Amilcar was killed, one hundred and fifty thousand Carthaginians slain, and the fleet destroyed, with the exception of a few vessels, which escaped only to meet a more disastrous fate of shipwreck; the remainder of the army being led into captivity, the prisoners were divided amongst the friendly powers, who employed them in all the most useful purposes of the state, cultivating the lands, adorning the cities with public edifices, temples, acqueducts, &c.; and it was from that period that the Sicilian Greeks began to erect those gigantic and splendid monuments of architectural taste, which have since so peculiarly distinguished the island of Sicily.

Such was the joy and popular feeling excited amongst the Syracusans by this victory, that Gelon was immediately raised to the throne, where he continued to reign until his death as a benefactor to his country.

But the sword of vengeance hung over the fate of

* See Diodorus, lib. xi. Herodotus says, this enormous army was transported in two thousand war galleys and three thousand vessels of burden.

Himæra; and Carthage, after being many times frustrated in her attempts to regain power in Sicily, at length sent a powerful army under the command of Hannibal, who still burning to revenge the shame of Cartharge as well as the lamented fate of his grandsire Amilcar, proceeded, after the destruction of Selinon, to the siege of Himæra*, whose walls, notwithstanding the most obstinate and courageous defence, at length fell before the formidable engines and battering rams of the enemy, just as a fleet of thirty-five sail arrived off the port to their relief; but alas too late! the work of destruction had commenced, the fire-brand was applied, and every soul that remained was massacred with the most reckless cruelty: three thousand were reserved by order of the barbarous Hannibal, who, to appease the manes of his grandfather, had them deliberately sacrificed in cold blood over the spot where his ancestor had bravely fought and fell.

After the siege, the city was entirely consumed by fire, the walls levelled, and the fortifications totally destroyed. Such was the diastrous fate of this unfortunate city; and not a vestige can be now traced to identify the ancient site.

Himæra is reputed to have been a splendid city. It shone in literature as well as the fine arts, and was peculiarly celebrated for its sculptors, whose numerous beautiful works, both in bronze and marble, were carried off by Hannibal to Carthage. It is further ennobled as the birth-place of the Greek poet Stesichorus, who was so beloved by his countrymen, that they had his verses engraved in their houses and temples: to him we are indebted for the interesting fable of the horse and stag, which he invented

* B. C. 409.

to urge his contending fellow citizens to concord, and warn them against the ambitious designs of Phalaris; and whose beauties Horace and La Fontaine have, each in their characteristic style, so exquisitely delineated. His daughter inherited his talents, and continued many years after his death to adorn the page of literature with her compositions. Pindar sings the praises of Stesichorus, as well as of the magnificent city in which he was born.

Leaving the fiume Grande and Mount St. Calogero on the left, we crossed the fiume Torto, and proceeded along the coast to Termini, where we arrived rather late; and the evening being somewhat cold, we were glad, after a little refreshment, to retire to our quarters, which were some degrees better than we had recently experienced.

This town is the Thermæ of the Greeks, so called on account of its hot springs, and belonged to the dominions of Himæra, whose surviving inhabitants, that had escaped by flight to Syracuse, returned to Thermæ and built a town, which they ornamented with the ruins of their native city. However, it did not attain any degree of splendour or renown until it became colonized with Romans, who called it Thermæ Hymerensis, and munificently adorned it with architectural beauties. On the destruction of Carthage, Scipio restored to them many of the bronze and marble statues taken by Hannibal; amongst them a beautiful female figure, representing the city of Himæra, and a statue of Stesichorus in his old age, reclining on a pillar, with a book in his hand, which latter Cicero describes as of inimitable workmanship.

Thermæ is celebrated as being the birth-place of Sthenius, whose generosity, firmness, and irresistible eloquence, saved the city from the fury of Pompey, who was despatched by the dictator Scylla to destroy it, on account of

the inhabitants uniting with the faction of Marius. He was also the only person who boldly opposed the abuses of the ambitious Verres, and successfully resisted his attempts to plunder the riches of the temples and other public buildings.

Modern Termini is a place of twelve thousand inhabitants, picturesquely situated on the declivity of Mount Euraco. It is surrounded with old dilapidated walls, and defended by a Saracenic castle*, whose commanding position, on a projecting rock above, presents an interesting subject for the pencil of the draftsman, and to the lover of the picturesque furnishes a wide and extensive expanse of prospect from its heights.

Friday, 24th.—We rose early in the morning, that we might see what was worthy of curiosity ere setting out for Palermo. The town is irregularly built, with narrow filthy streets, full of old convents and churches. In the town-hall are preserved several paleographic relics of the ancient Thermæ, and a corroded statue, said to be of Sthenius, whose memory is kept alive in modern days by the paintings of his most worthy deeds, which cover (I cannot say adorn) the walls of the apartments.

The suburbs and neighbouring country of Termini present an infinitely more civilized and animated appearance than the generality of similar towns in Sicily. It is well cultivated, and seems richly clothed with olive plantations, vineyards, the agrumi, and other fruit trees, which, blended with a variety of villas interspersed around, constitutes not an unpleasing picture.

Very scanty vestiges can be traced of the ancient town, with the exception of an aqueduct, a few broken columns

* A Saracenic inscription is still visible over the entrance-gate of this castle.

inserted in modern walls, and hot springs, which still preserve their fame, and continue to be resorted to with wonderful effect by persons labouring under a variety of diseases. They vary in heat from 118° Fahrenheit to 126° at different seasons of the year, and are strongly impregnated with sulphur, iron, &c. &c.

Termini is a caricatore, from whence a quantity of corn, fruits, rice, wine, and oil is annually exported, besides anchovies and tunny, for which it is celebrated, particularly the former.

From Termini there is a good coach road all the way to Palermo, distant twenty-four miles. The first part presents a series of naked heights to the left, with the sea to the right; we crossed the river Termini a short distance from the town, and ten miles beyond it, after traversing the town of Milicia, the fiume Milicia, beyond whence is the small town of Altavilla, where we left our mules, and proceeded to Castello di Solanta, a royal castle, standing on a sandy bay under Mount Alfano*, on whose summit stood the ancient city of Solus, and one of the three fortresses, as recorded by Thucydides and others, built by the Phœnicians for the protection of their commerce, when the Greeks first began to overrun the island. On *their* expulsion it was fortified, and ornamented with temples by the Greeks, who called it Σολοις. Afterwards it received the appellation of Soluntum from the Romans, to which people may be attributed the two ancient roads that lead up to it on the south-east side.

Many vestiges of antiquity are visible about the mountain, such as the *débris* of architectural ornaments, traces of two small temples, which, from their Doric character,

* A corruption of its Saracenic appellation Jalfam.

are evidently Grecian, remains of aqueducts, walls, cisterns, &c. &c., besides a considerable number of sepulchres in the plain, in a high state of preservation, generally imputed to Phœnician origin.

On the coast, just under the mountain, are the Tonnaras of Solanta and St. Elia; the former a royal fishery, and a source of considerable diversion to the late King of Naples whilst residing in Sicily, during the period of the French invasion of his capital.

The quantity of tunny caught here in the season, we were informed, is almost incredibly enormous, still preserving the same celebrity in that respect for which it was so greatly renowned amongst the Saracenic toilers at the net. Indeed, there is no species of fishing in this, as well as every other part of the Mediterranean, that may be traced to so early a period of history as that of the tunny: a fish that was esteemed by the ancients to be the best and largest of this sea. According to Aulus Gellius, it was served up in every variety of form at the best tables of the Romans, who considered the salted roe a peculiar delicacy, thereby proving our modern tunny and Italian caviar, or bottargo, to be articles of *friandise* of greater antiquity than we are inclined to give them credit for in the present day. As one of the recent Latin writers observes, "Porro Thunnorum abdomina salita (Graeci ἀ μαγαρικὸν) apud veteres in deliciis habita sunt. Id facile intelligas, ex Lucilii versibus apud Nonnium, et Aul. Gell. lib. 10.

"Ad cenam adducam et primum hic abdomina Thunni
Advenientibus priva dabo
Pontarque salsamentum piscium.

The tunny fish pass the straits of Gibraltar about the commencement of spring, from whence they proceed in

immense quantities as far as the Grecian Archipelago, not unfrequently passing the Dardanelles, and spreading their species over the whole of the Black Sea*. They swim in very large shoals, which is remarked by Ovid: "Et pavidi magno fugientes agmine Thynni†." Pliny the Elder, also, in noticing that characteristic, as well as their propensity to follow ships, says, a tremendous shoal following, on one occasion, the ships of Alexander, threw the whole fleet into such a state of terror and dismay, that they formed themselves into line, as if about to be attacked by some formidable enemy.

According to Athenæus‡, the tunny formed a very considerable proportion of the sustenance of the early Greeks, whose fisheries were numerous as well as extensive. They established sacrifices, called ϑυνναια, which they celebrated at the commencement of the season, when they offered up oblations to the sovereign of the sea, imploring his auspices and protection against the ravages of the sword-fish, which frequently destroyed their nets. Remains of these sacrifices may be traced down to the present day in many parts of Sicily, where the fishermen are in the habit of throwing the first fish caught, into the sea, accompanied with prayers and libations, made to the patron saint of the place.

The neighbourhood of Solanta also furnishes the sporting amateur with an abundance of fine quails, which in their annual transit frequent this spot in considerable numbers; they are esteemed to be a peculiarly fine species, consequently frequently sent to Naples for sale.

* Diodorus; who also, in speaking of the Ichthyophagi in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, describes their mode of taking the tunny.

† Pliny Hist. l. ix., c. 3.

‡ Athenæus, l. vii.

From Solanta the coast trends suddenly to the north, terminating in a bold elevated point, called Cape Zafferano, which forms the bay of Solanta, where vessels frequently take shelter during westerly winds; indeed, at the moment we passed, many were lying there *à l'abri du vent*, for the wind had blown fresh during the whole of the day from the north-west, and menaced more gloomy prospects for the timid mariners of this country.

At one o'clock we quitted Altavilla, and soon after passed through Bagaria, a town of about six thousand inhabitants, situated on a river of the same name, and in the midst of a spacious smiling plain, which, gifted by nature with fertility, and aided by skilful cultivation, exhibits a scene of exuberant riches almost the whole way up to the gates of Palermo.

Like the celebrated vale of the Golden Shell, to the east of the city, it presents to the eye of the traveller a more gratifying specimen of the profitable effects of human industry and exertion than any other part of Sicily. It is thickly interspersed with the villas and casinos of the Palermitan nobles, which diffuses an air of animation through the neighbourhood, very much in contrast with the desolate uninhabited tracts of country the whole interior of the island displays. It abounds in corn lands and pasture, divided by hedge rows of the cactus and the aloe; on every side are seen gardens, teeming with a profusion of vegetables of every description; sometimes girt with orchards, like the gardens of the Hesperides, glittering with the golden fruit of the lemon and the orange; sometimes with fig trees and vineyards.

This romantic scene of beauty did not fail to excite our most unqualified admiration, which was considerably heightened by the peculiar effect of wildness the weather

had contributed to the sky; the sea, ruffled by the temporary blast, heaved up its angry billows to our right, whilst a chain of rugged mountains bordered the plain to the left, overspread with a lurid glare of evening light, that would have admirably suited the imagination of a Salvator Rosa.

As we ruminatingly paced along, I could not help observing how luxuriantly every little waste seemed to produce, in addition to many other odoriferous shrubs and flowers, the oleander, palmetto, and the palma christi.

At five we crossed a good modern bridge over the Oretus *, which, according to Ptolemy, was called by the Greeks Eleutheros. It flows through a long tract of pasture lands and orchards; it is by no means wanting in classical interest, its west bank being renowned in history for the skilful stratagem of Cæcilia Metellus, by which he gained a glorious victory over the Carthaginian army under Asdrubal, taking or destroying the whole of those elephants which had so long opposed the most formidable obstacles to the struggles of the Roman armies in Sicily †.

The Roman commander having dug a deep trench near the walls of Panormus, assumed the appearances of timidity, and retreated within the town; which so effectually decoyed the Carthaginians, that they boldly advanced with their whole army close up to the trench, where the elephants (being furiously galled with darts from a body of archers stationed on the walls for that purpose) became so infuriated and ungovernable, that many jumped into the trench, whilst the remainder turned against their own

* The Oretus is now more familiarly known by the name of Amiraglio, from the person of that name, at whose private expense the bridge was built.

† In the year 249 B. C.

party, and threw the whole army into dismay; which auspicious moment Metellus sagaciously availed himself of, by sallying out with his whole force, driving the enemy as far as the river, and there gaining that most complete and advantageous victory which procured him the honours of a splendid triumph on his return to Rome.

At six we arrived at our old quarters on the Piazza Marina, where, after refreshing ourselves by a change of apparel, and a more comfortable repast than we had for some time previously experienced, we spent the remainder of the evening in walking about the town. It was that period called the Novena, or the nine days before the nativity, established by the Roman catholic church for the exercise of certain devotions and religious ceremonies appropriated to the holy virgin, and which is celebrated in Sicily with the most fervent piety.

The multiplied statues of the Virgin, enshrined in the numerous niches of every street, were brilliantly lighted up by nine immense wax candles, emblematic of the anniversary, before each of which were seen prostrate groups of women and children offering up their idolatrous worship, accompanied with groans, digital crossings, and the counting of beads. In front of some, parties of the Calabrian pifferari stood exercising their discordant energies in the service of devotion; at others, two or three harpers accompanied the pious offerings of the religious enthusiasts with the more soothing and inspiring harmony of their instruments; whilst in two or three parts of the city, excellent bands of music poured forth the most fascinating and melodious strains before some of the more favoured and most popular idols, which, decked out in all the gaudy splendour of superstitious bigotry, seemed to excite the universal enthusiasm of all classes.

Attracted by the plaintive melody of the band, we too paused with the crowd, and I must confess I never recollect enjoying a more exquisite musical treat than I that night experienced in Palermo; every thing aided to dispose the mind to pleasurable feeling, and to warm the imagination; the softness of the air lent its influence to the tranquillity of the night scene; not a sound met the ear, save the melody of the performers and the occasional responses of the devotees to the orisons of a few Benedictine friars, who, as on all similar occasions, took an ostensible part in the ceremony, to excite religious enthusiasm by their exemplary *appearances*.

The scene was striking, somewhat imposing, and picturesque; and the partial glare of light from the shrine over the expressive physiognomies of the surrounding group, contrasted with the deep lurid shade into which the rest of their persons were thrown, might have furnished a subject worthy the greatest efforts of a Rembrandt's genius.

Nothing could exceed the touching expression given by the performers to their equally spirited execution, whose brilliance as well as scientific precision might have done honour to the orchestras of the Scala or the San Carlos; talents, however, little to be expected on viewing their rustic exterior, and the apparent rudeness of their instruments. We continued to a late hour following the band to the different shrines, for we felt the full force of its attractive charms; indeed, insensible must have been that soul that could not bend to such magic influence. At the same time, I could not help smiling at the subjects they selected for the occasion, which, rather irrelevant to the sacred festival, were for the most part chosen from the profane compositions of Rossini and Mozart, and occasioned many most ludicrous inconsistencies, when associated

with the operas from which they were taken, namely, Don Giovanni, Il Barbiere di Seviglia, and others.

On Monday, the 27th of December, we re-embarked on board the steam boat for Naples, where, aided by a favourable breeze from the northward, we arrived early the following afternoon; and I cannot avoid expressing the unbounded satisfaction I derived in every respect from my tour round this interesting island. The most delicious weather favoured our excursion, from the period of our departure to the day we arrived again in Palermo; and notwithstanding the dangers that travellers are frequently exposed to, in traversing the solitudes and sequestered paths of the island, we experienced neither insult nor incivility from any individual throughout the whole of the journey*. The country is perpectly safe, and more free from maranders or ill-disposed persons than any part of Italy, and may be freely travelled through without the *urged* necessity of a campiere's protection.

* I should nevertheless advise all travellers to carry arms with them, in case of emergencies in a solitary path, where one ill-disposed individual, with weapons of destruction, would feel emboldened to attack when aware of the harmless state of his opponent.

CHAPTER XIII.

The character of the Sicilians exhibits features, which, under a more liberal state of things, would elevate them to a high rank in the scale of nations: they are animated, warm hearted, courteous, with acute perceptions, strong passions, and a natural disposition to friendliness; such elements constitute the basis of true national excellence, and which, when regulated by education, and directed to the virtuous uses of society, might prove invaluable sources of human greatness.

My necessarily circumscribed intercourse with the people of this island will, I fear, incur the imputation of presumption, by thus venturing to give my opinion of national character; however, I am inclined to think that very middle rate perceptive powers, when diligently applied by observation, may in a very short time enable a man to form a tolerably accurate idea of general character, particularly when combined with authentic information from persons, which I failed not to procure through every channel where my judgment led me to place reliance.

Notwithstanding the numerous advantageous characteristics nature has endowed this people with, the action of their powers is checked by a selfish government; a narrow illiberal policy, both of church and state, suppresses and restrains every germ of genius that might tend to unfetter the physical or intellectual powers of the nation; the consequence of which is, the people are poor, ignorant, and superstitious, their religion being blended with all the follies and abuses of Roman catholic priestcraft, which, in

its exterior, possesses infinitely more the character of idolatrous paganism, than the simplicity and purity of christian faith.

Add to this, the nobility who form a most unequal and superabundant portion of the community, never live on, or even visit their estates but to enforce the annual payment of their rent, which is made in kind, by a stipulated proportion of the gross produce of each farm, as agreed between the cultivator and the proprietor.

Many, and particularly the most opulent individuals, of the aristocracy, usually migrate to Naples, or some foreign country, where they squander away almost the whole of their incomes; thus depriving their native land, not only of those moral benefits resulting from the influence of communion with their fellow countrymen and dependants, but also of those physical advantages, namely, the diffusion of their wealth, and that excitement to the industry of the labourer and the artisan, caused by the increased demand for the necessaries and luxuries of life, which so unequivocally contribute to the prosperity and improvement of a nation.

The ingenuity and industry of man are called into action by the wants of his fellow creatures, and those wants are increased according to the circumstances of individuals. Opulence generates luxury, and luxury teaches new necessities, thereby rendering the rich man dependant on the exertions of the poor for his comforts, and creating that reciprocity of services so wisely ordained by providence for the good intelligence and welfare of society.

In Sicily nothing is spent in the amelioration of estates; no encouragement is offered for the farmer to extend his system of cultivation; whilst, on the contrary, every ob-

stacle interposes to check the progress towards improvement.

The difficulties and expense of land carriage, created by the almost total absence of roads, necessarily tend to enhance the prices of articles conveyed, which, together with the obnoxious restrictions of commerce, shut out the purchasers from foreign markets, and preclude all the associated advantages of commercial competition.

Under such circumstances the tenants go plodding on in the pristine rudeness of their forefathers, content to make a sufficiency to meet the common exigencies of themselves and families, and to supply the demands of taxation and the church; which latter makes no trifling appeal directly or indirectly to the earnings of industry in a country swarming with monks and friars.

The poor labouring classes, almost without work, lead a life of comparative sloth and inactivity; deprived of any stimulus to exercise their energies, they go grovelling on in the most abject state of human abasement, without the aid or consolatory presence of the more wealthy and intelligent classes of the community, to prop them up in the hour of sickness or of want*. However the horrors of

* This is the melancholy condition to which our own sister island is now almost reduced; and, though totally irrelevant to this work, I cannot resist making a few remarks on a subject so intimately connected with the best and most important interests of both England and Ireland, and which claims the deepest consideration and attention of every Englishman, who is endowed with any of those generous feelings that mark the philanthropist and the patriot.

No one can, I imagine, for a moment doubt the distresses of the Irish; and (notwithstanding the sophistical arguments so violently supported by prejudiced or interested persons), I cannot help thinking it must be evident, to the perceptions of every reflecting man, that they exclusively arise from the fatal effects of absenteeism; to it alone can be justly

poverty, and the physical sufferings of the wretched, are greatly diminished in a country like Sicily, where nature

attributed the destructive poison that has been rankling at the vitals of their country so many years.

' The various classes and gradations of society constitute the composing links of a great chain, whose strength and unity depend on the intimate connection and soundness of each component part, any one of which withdrawn or impaired, necessarily weakens or destroys the whole.

The reciprocal benefits each class renders to the other, constitute the bond of union by which the community are kept together in mutual harmony and good intelligence. The wants of the wealthy supply the means of labour to the poor, who in health are encouraged by those wants to the exercise of honest industry; whilst in sickness and distress they are aided by the christian charities of the rich. The poor, by their energies, administer to the luxuries and comforts of their superiors; in return for whose sympathies and support they are urged to serve the rich with fidelity and respect, and in the hour of danger to defend their interests with zeal. According to the old adage, " a good master will make a good servant."

However, in Ireland the supporting links of the chain are separated; the rich and the nobility have deserted their country; and their mansions, from whence once emanated animation, joy, and activity, and where once the hand of charity was stretched forth, are now become the solitary abodes of silence and desolation. The oppressed cultivators of the soil are left to the merciless exactions and abuses of stewards; no one remains in the country to stimulate the industry of the labourer, to diffuse the blessings of civilization, or to spread intellectual illumination. No one is left to fill the municipal offices, to perform the important duties of the magistracy, but agents, middle men, and shopkeepers, whose ignorance and ineptness unfit them for the responsibilities thus devolved upon them; the consequence of which is, the administration of the laws is bad, the ends of justice unattained, whilst discontent and disorder are spread abroad.

The welfare of the poor man depends as much on the fostering cares and watchfulness of the rich, as that of a child does on the vigilance and protection of its parents. In his difficulties he looks up to them for council and support; in sickness and poverty, for those pecuniary and physical aids, which, however trifling, when accompanied with the consolations of sympathy, yield infinitely more content than greater boons, ungraciously bestowed through the medium of agents or of stewards.

Besides which, by the benevolent attentions of the resident ladies of

has blessed them with so genial a climate, and where the indigenous productions of the land almost furnish man with

the parish, his children are directed into the path of religion and morality: by those laudable exertions in the cause of christian charity which so pre-eminently distinguish our fair countrywomen, the naked are clothed, and a variety of sufferings relieved, peculiar to the abodes of the sick and infirm poor. Indeed, what can we expect from a set of human beings left to themselves, in a state of ignorance and want. The moral powers of mankind are only invigorated and improved by instruction and example. His inclination to respect and observe the laws of society, is the result of moral influence; his desire to follow the impulse of passion and the dictates of necessity, that of instinct.

Are we, then, to be surprised at the misery of the poor Irish, at the desperation to which they are driven, or at the crimes they commit, deserted as they are by those persons to whom they can alone look up for encouragement, example, and support? No! They are the natural and inevitable consequences of such abandonment; religion has nothing to do with it; to suppose it, betrays the height of absurdity, the extreme of mental debility, as well as ignorance of human nature: and it is an insult to human reason to endeavour to persuade the thinking part of society, that emancipation would contribute one iota towards the amelioration of the condition of the Irish.

The outcry of emancipation is made the watch-word of a formidable faction, raised by a few ambitious place-hunters, who, to participate in the loaves and fishes of public office, persuade the populace, through the powerful influence and instrumentality of an interested priesthood, that the degraded condition of Ireland arises from the oppressive restrictions attached to Roman Catholicism; thus, for the mere gratification of selfish feeling, they run the risk of subverting the order of society, and exciting rebellion.

It is at the same time melancholy to observe so many excellent men, of undoubted sincerity and unimpeachable integrity, either from ignorance of circumstances, or mistaken notions of policy, lend themselves so strenuously to the cause of catholic emancipation.

Make the trial, exclaim some *liberal*-thinking politicians. Can they be aware that, in trying the experiment, they would be, as it were, throwing open the flood-gates of civil and religious broils—of anarchy and confusion? Can any man, who is not in a fit state for a straight-jacket, think for a moment, that persons so hostile to the established church of England, should be rendered eligible to dispense the most important ec-

the means of supporting life; the consequence of which is the people are comparatively content, and every where peaceful.

clesiastical patronage of the country? Or, that being thus eligible and in power, that they would not distribute such patronage in a manner most suitable to the interests of their own church?

If the members of the Roman Catholic religion are sincere in their faith, they must necessarily feel as anxious to extend its influence and further its interests as the upholders of Protestantism; I should think basely of them if they did not so. In such a case, what would become of our universities, and of *our* civil rights?

It is but too evident to common understanding, that present concessions, and the granted equality of civil rights, would inevitably lead to a struggle for eventual superiority, to the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism, and all those concomitant evils which our ancestors have, during so many ages of war and bloodshed, laboured to root out; to a sacrifice of the very principles on which is founded the succession of the House of Brunswick, and to the destruction of the principal support and most important safeguard of our excellent constitution.

As a well wisher to the cause of the Emerald Isle, let me earnestly advise her aristocracy, ere it be too late, to direct their exertions to the only efficient means of affordiug aid to their suffering country; let me urge on their attention the beneficial results of that truly noble and exemplary conduct, exhibited during a very long and useful life, by one of the most illustrious persons that ever adorned the British peerage; I scarce need say her grace the Duchess of Buccleugh, whose decease I lament to see recorded in the daily paper that lies before me.

In imitation of her principles, they will restore prosperity and activity to their native land; they will diffuse the smiles of contentment to millions of their fellow-creatures, and lay up a store of blessings for themselves and their posterity.

Wherever that eminent personage resided, misery was unknown, cheerfulness and unanimity reigned around. The sufferings of sickness and infirmity were alleviated, the poor and fatherless were protected, and the distresses of misfortune were relieved.

Wherever she possessed a house or land, there her name was hailed as a rallying point for the destitute; absent or present, within an extended sphere round the precincts of her possessions, the genial influence of her beneficence and amiabilities was felt. The higher circles in which she

It may be truly said that in Sicily the moral organization of society amongst the great body of its population is left entirely to the influence and guardianship of an avaricious self-interested priesthood, whose tenets, it must be obvious to any man of common sense and experience in the world, are to retain the lower orders in particular, in the grossest ignorance, and encourage their religious prejudices and superstitions; by which means they become instruments within their power, and are more effectually rendered subservient to their selfish ends.

The habits, pursuits, occupations, and amusements of the Sicilians, correspond very much with those of their neighbours the Italians; in the dress and general appearance however of the higher ranks, there seems to prevail more style with a greater air of fashion, particularly amongst the gentlemen, who are extremely partial to the inventions of the English *sneider* which they usually patronize.

The festive costume of the lower orders is remarkably

ranged seemed to acquire a tone of superiority from the ascendancy of her many elegant accomplishments, combined with her more weighty principles of pure piety and moral rule; whilst the tenantry, the tradespeople, and the poor, constituted, as it were, parts of one family whose interests and welfare she watched over with the unceasing anxiety of a tender mother: she was a general benefactress and an universal friend.

Nor was her grace a solitary instance of such merits in the noble branch whose name she dignified and adorned. Like a bright conspicuous star, in a brilliant constellation, she appeared in the midst of a family all of whose goodness and whose virtues have shone with uninterrupted refulgence through a long line of honourable ancestry.

May their laudable example be looked up to for general imitation by the present age, as it will be held out in the page of history for the admiration of futurity: and may the youthful heir of their distinguished race, realize the hopes he has hitherto given, of transmitting those virtues pure and unpolluted to another generation.

picturesque, particularly that of the women, which differs almost in every district of the island: in some parts, like that of the Calabrian, it partakes of all the fanciful varieties of Grecian dress which have been handed down through a long series of centuries from their Grecian ancestors*— the full sleeve, the apron fantastically adorned with figures and terminated with fringe or lace, the square flat head dress with long pendant ear-rings and plaited tresses, the whole of which is sometimes surmounted by the graceful folds of a long mantle. In other places the prevalence of the basquiña and mantilla betray the remains of Spanish preponderance. The former is a sort of holiday petticoat, of mixed colours, neatly trimmed with flounces, and when thrown over the delicate form of a female is peculiarly elegant, particularly when combined with the latter as worn by the Spanish women; it is a long veil falling from the top of the head down to the waist, which in Sicily is most frequently substituted by a cotton or linen handkerchief. The costume of the men more generally resembles that of Spain, with a broad belt round the waist, and a white cotton cap instead of a hat, which is protected from the wet by the pointed capuche of a large cloak they usually carry in case of rain.

The principal productions of Sicily, namely, wine, oil, corn, with every variety of fruits, exist in the greatest abundance; which, with its further capability of productive-

* The Greek costume, in its more modern garb, may be seen in those several hamlets and villages in Sicily called Casali Greci, which are colonies established by a number of Greek families, who fled thither for safety on the irruption of the Turks into Constantinople in 1453, and who still continue exclusively to intermarry, preserving their original habits, dress, and language. The most extensive is a place called Piano di Greci, about fourteen miles from Palermo.

ness and many excellent harbours, render it a most enviable acquisition to any crown of Europe.

Had circumstances permitted, I would most willingly have made a longer sojourn in the island; which, independent of various local attractions, was strongly urged on my inclinations by the very friendly disposition we every where experienced from the inhabitants of all classes we had any thing to do with. And I warmly recommend every one who in his travels should reach as far south as Naples, to make an excursion to this captivating island. The difficulties which formerly interposed such formidable obstacles and objections have totally disappeared: long land journeys through the dangerous paths of Calabria to the Faro, or protracted ones by sea, in dirty, loathsome, unskilfully conducted packets, are now altogether avoided, by recently established steam boats, which are admirably regulated by some of the most respectable commercial houses of Naples, between whence and Palermo they ply at stated periods, touching at Messina either going or returning. So that instead of being from three till frequently ten days *en route* in an Italian packet, a passage may now, in spite of unfavourable breezes, be ensured in two and thirty hours.

A tour through Italy and Sicily I think productive of the most valuable acquisitions in the way of scientific knowledge, to any person who feels disposed to profit by the advantages it holds out; every inch of ground almost has been rendered in some way or other sacred to the muses, the contemplation of which not only revives what we previously knew of classical history, but stimulates its further cultivation; and at the same time begets a taste for the pursuit of that ornamental and entertaining science,

which, with all its interminable associations, constitute half the dearest, the most durable, and delightful pleasures of a refined mind.

Sicily, in a classical point of view, may be considered equally important as Italy, intimately blended as it is with the most interesting affairs of Greece, Carthage, and Rome; the knowledge of its history being essential to the study of the other three. Through the medium of Sicily, Rome first commenced her career of foreign greatness; there it was, she first acquired that taste for the fine arts, by which she became, in after ages, so pre-eminently distinguished; and from thence she obtained all those splendid works of Grecian skill and ingenuity, many of which to the present day continue to adorn the galleries of the "Eternal City," and to be held up as the most perfect models of human art.

No one can travel round its shores without his attention being directed to the meditation of all that is striking and noble in history and fiction; it opens quite a new region of intellectual enchantment; it revives some of the sweetest recollections of our juvenile studies, and improves the mind by the consequent reminiscences which it excites of our classical attainments and pursuits.

But Sicily does not owe its merit alone to its asociations with antiquity; such are its natural beauties, that it exhibits, for the study of the painter and the draftsmen, the greatest possible variety of luxuriant scenery and romantic forms; subjects suited to the styles of a Salvator, a Poussin, or a Claude.

The naturalist will find a never-ending source of gratification in its minerals, fossils, and volcanic phenomena; whilst to the antiquarian and archæologist, it furnishes an abundant store of riches, in the way of ruins and ancient

relics, with palæographic inscriptions to confirm their knowledge and elucidate history.

Such is Sicily; and if those persons, who in future may be induced to explore its shores, should derive half the gratification experienced by the author, they will feel amply compensated for the many little inconveniences they must necessarily undergo in such a tour; besides laying in a valuable stock of entertaining reflection for the many solitary hours we are all, more or less, destined to experience in after life.

ITINERARY

OF THE

MOST FREQUENTED ROADS THROUGH SICILY.

FROM PALERMO, ROUND BY TRAPANI, TO GIRGENTI.

	Miles.
Palermo	
Alcamo	30
Trapani	30
Marsala	18
Mazzara*	14
Campo Bello	11
Castel Vetrano	5
Pileri or ruins of Selinon	8
Sciacca	15
Siculiana	30
Girgenti	12

There is a short though bad road, of two days journey, from Palermo to Girgenti by Villa Frati and Fontana Freddi, about seventy-four miles.

FROM GIRGENTI TO SYRACUSE.

	Miles.
Girgenti	
Palma	14
Alicata	14
Terra Nuovo	21
Calatagirone	20
Palagonia	16
Lentini	16
Syracuse	26

* From Mazzara to Castel Vetrano twelve miles, and from Campo Bello to Pileri seven miles.

The road from Calatagirone to Syracuse, by Vizzini and Palazzuolo, is about the same distance as the above, but more hilly and rocky.

FROM SYRACUSE TO MESSINA.

	Miles.
Syracuse	
Lepo	24
Catania	18
Aci	12
Giarre	10
Taormina, or the inn at Giardini	10
Ali	16
Messina	14

On account of the want of regular established inns, and the consequent custom of carrying your own provisions in Sicily, the expenses of travelling are not very heavy; however, as the island seems likely to become more frequented by tourists than formerly, circumstances may *improve* in that respect more rapidly probably than will prove desireble. A letter of credit is the best resource to be provided with, as the traveller will generally lose by the gold and silver of any other country, the mint even of Naples being distinct from that of Sicily. The following is the common currency of the latter, with its comparative value when at par with England.

Sicilian.	*English.*
An ounce*, 30 tari	12*s.* 6*d.*
A dollar or scudo, 12 tari	5 0
A ducat*, 10 tari	4 2
A tari, 10 baiocchi	0 5
A baiocchо, 2 grani	0 0½
A grano, 4 piccooli	0 0¼

* N.B. The ounce and ducat are of nominal valuation there being no such coins.

The hire of mules is generally from ten to twelve taris per day each, and the hirer pays at the same rate the number of days required for their return home; consequently, it is always better for the traveller, if intending to return to the same point, to retain the mules and guide through the journey, whereby he will save half the expense, and avoid the nuisance of constantly transferring the baggage and changing the guides. He is also advised previous to concluding his bargain with the muleteer, to see the animals he is to be furnished with, otherwise he may be treated with the luxury of riding a jaded steed the whole of his journey; and I should strongly recommend every one to provide himself with arms, for although the country is quiet, and the people generally well conducted, yet as in every other part of the world, there are evil disposed individuals in Sicily whose designs are more favoured and facilitated than elsewhere, by the sequestered solitudes through which the paths frequently lead; but who will never attempt an attack with the knowledge of your being armed, and the chance of meeting with resistance.

FROM PALERMO TO MARSALA.

	Miles.
Palermo	
Alcamo	30
Vita	11
Marsala	30

FROM PALERMO TO MAZZARA.

Palermo	
Alcamo	30
Vita	11
Salemi	10
Mazzara	20

FROM PALERMO TO SCIACCA.

	Miles.
Palermo	
Parco	6
Piano de Greci	8
Corleone	10
Contessa	8
Sambuca	18
Sciacca	10

FROM PALERMO TO SYRACUSE.

Palermo	
Termini	24
Calatavutura	18
Alimena	18
Castro Giovanni	18
Piazza	18
Calatagirone	14
Syracuse	58

FROM CATANIA, ROUND MOUNT ÆTNA, TO TAORMINA.

Catania	
Paterno	13
Aderno	12
Bronte	16
Randazzo	13
Francavilla	16
Taormina	12

FROM PALERMO TO SYRACUSE.

Palermo	
Villa Frati	20
Fundaco dei Xaccati	
Val del Olino	26
Calatanisetta	22
Piazza	30
Calatagirone	14
Syracuse	58

FROM PALERMO TO CATANIA.

Palermo	
Termini	24

	Miles.
Calatavutura	18
Alimena	18
Leonforte	24
Regalbuto	16
Paterno	20
Catania	13

FROM MESSINA TO PALERMO.

Messina	
Melazzo	30
Furnari	14
Pâtti	13
Brolo	8
Naso	5
St. Agatha	11
Caronia	16
St. Stephano	8
Tusa	7
Finale	5
Cefalu	12
Rocella	10
Termini	14
Milicia	10
Bagaria	7
Palermo	7

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY T. AND J. B. FLINDELL, 67, ST. MARTIN'S-LANE.

00085774

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016